

IN THESE TIMES



The Delicate
Balance
in Poland

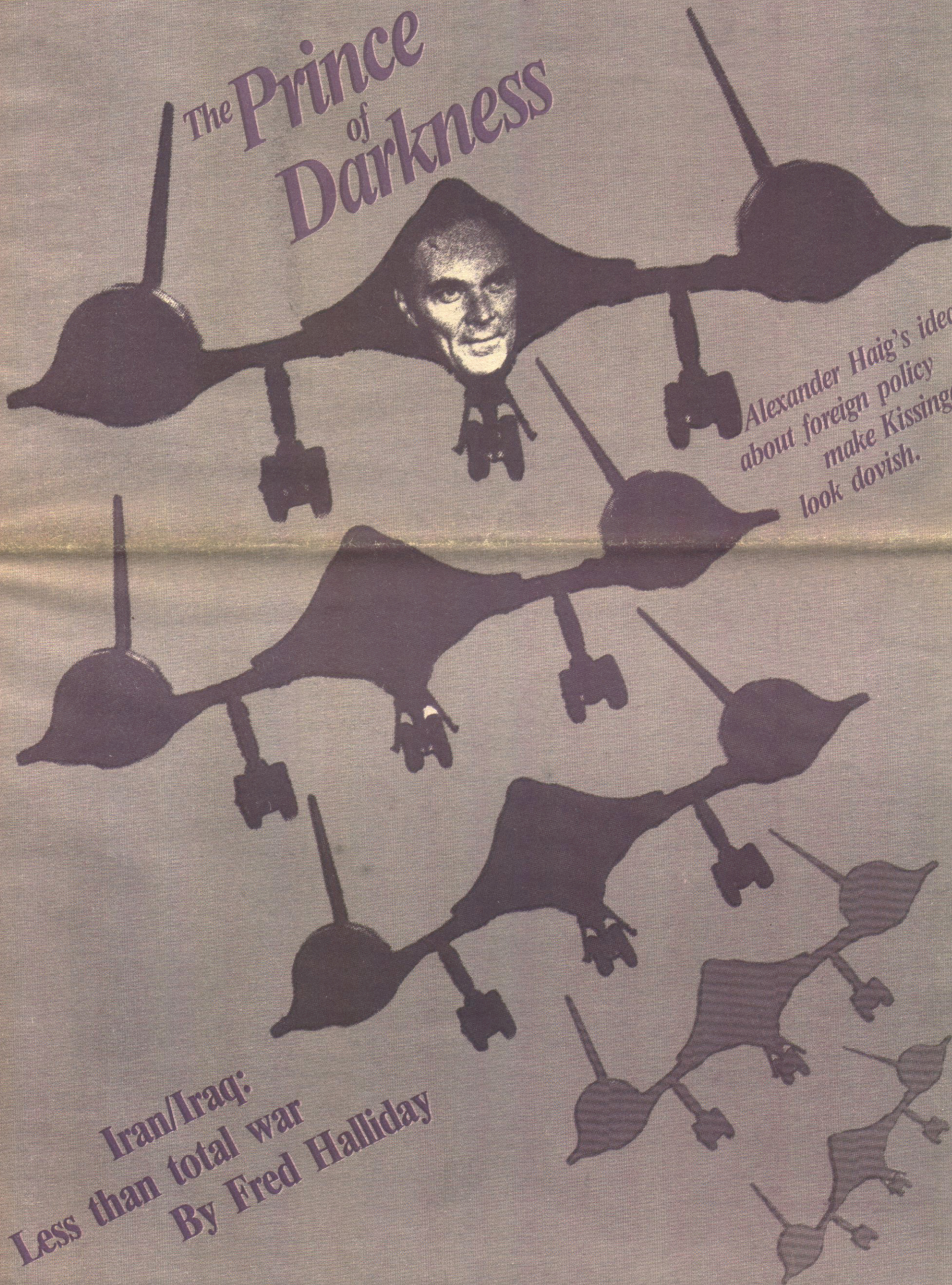
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THE INSIDE STORY



Harry Britt is more than the token gay

By Judy MacLean

SAN FRANCISCO

With his East Texas twang and more than a little of the manner of the Methodist minister he once was, Harry Britt seems unlikely to be an elected city official who is both openly gay and openly socialist. San Francisco is one of the few places it could happen, but even here it has taken a lot of hard work.

"I've had three elections in the two years I've been in office, so a large part of what I've been doing has been trying to get re-elected," says Britt, a soft-spoken, conservatively dressed member of the Board of Supervisors (San Francisco's equivalent of a city council.)

Britt was appointed supervisor in early 1979, shortly after Harvey Milk, San Francisco's first gay supervisor, was killed by ex-supervisor Dan White. "Mayor Feinstein really was offering me a slot in the ruling elite, to be the token gay person on the board," says Britt. His trouble with Feinstein since then, he says, stems from his unwillingness to accept that role and his bringing of activists—gays, environmentalists, members of San Francisco's many minorities, senior citizens, disabled people and those concerned with the city's neighborhoods and housing—down to City Hall with him.

Harvey Milk was elected in 1977 after city activists succeeded in converting the city-wide supervisorial elections into district races. A "gay seat" was created in the fifth district, which included the largely gay Castro area of the city. Britt worked on Milk's campaign, and after the election became president of the San Francisco Gay Democratic Club (now known as the Harvey Milk Gay Democratic Club).

Milk and Britt built the club into a strong political force that worked in coalition with other San Francisco have-nots. Incensed by the new line-up of supervisors, many of whom did not follow the agenda of corporate San Francisco, a group representing downtown business repeatedly put the issue of city-wide elections on the ballot. In August 1980 they finally won the issue in a special election, forcing Britt, recently elected as District Five's representative, to run a city-wide race. His coalition-building paid off; Britt placed a respectable sixth out of the 50-odd candidates (the top 11 go onto the board).

Even though he's shown a gay can win city-wide, and

even though several other supervisors who had represented neighborhood interests won, Britt says it's urgent to restore district elections. "Several supervisors are not going to do as good a job as they did before. They're not accountable to the same people. The money people know how to play their politics city-wide. It's very, very hard to say 'no' to someone who is providing the financial base to keep you in office."

The day he was appointed to complete Milk's term, Britt was questioned about city employee pay raises. "I'm not an expert on the problems of the city," he answered. "I'm going to need help."

Britt, who never imagined he'd hold public office until the day of the appointment, says he's still not an expert. "But I don't need to be. I think the job of a politician is to organize other people and communities to solve problems, not to have all the data in their head," he says, gesturing around his small, spare City Hall office, which is free of piles of paper. He has advisory committees of many different types.

He meets regularly, for example, with activists from the disabled community. "They are in the process of making some fairly strong claims around their legitimate rights as citizens to ride buses and so forth. They do the work, they do the research, they formulated the bill I'll be sponsoring. I meet with them and advise them as to what is going to be politically possible, and what isn't. I rely on activists. I'm an organizer," he says.

In fact, he says, he only takes up issues with constituencies behind them. "As a non-officeholder, I spent a lot of time trying to be right on issues, to be correct. Now, it's not that I want to be incorrect, but the important skill is finding a constituency out there that can make it possible to win."

The same goes for gay rights on a national level, he says. "You cannot go to senators in Arkansas and Virginia and say, 'Vote for a gay rights bill,' because their constituencies aren't there yet. We have to develop support for that position within Arkansas so it becomes reasonable to ask a senator from Arkansas to vote for us. It doesn't do any good to ask your friends to commit suicide for you. And that's why we have to organize our turf, on issue after issue."

Back in San Francisco, "the big issue is whether what's good for the downtown businesses is good for the rest of the city," says Britt. A small peninsula with a speculative real estate market heading toward the stratosphere, the city may soon be "a place with corporate headquarters, a tourist business and only the very wealthy or the subsidized living here. If this happens, San Francisco as we know it will die. It will not be a place to come to get away from less friendly climes, whether you're a gay or a counterculture person or an Asian. The life or death issue is to get the decision-making about the future of the city to be made by people who live and work here." Rent control has been a central skirmish in this battle.

Growing up in the church.

Britt hails from Port Arthur, Texas, which was also hometown to Janis Joplin. Of his youth he says, "I lived there the first 18 years of my life, but I didn't grow up. It was really the church that pushed me beyond the very limited cultural values of Port Arthur." Though he had to leave, and in some ways shares Janis Joplin's alienation from the place, today he says, "It's also in some ways a democratic city. The dominant social institutions are working class. There are a lot of black people, Latin people and Louisiana French people, who are also looked down on."

Later, in the mid-'60s, Britt was a Methodist minister in Chicago, doing neighborhood organizing. "I think I'm a pretty good listener to people who are reaching out for more power," he says.

Britt feels that parts of the gay culture can be understood as a strategy for coping with extreme powerlessness. "We have to learn new ways to live with our strength," he says. But he's impatient with critics of some aspects of gay male life. "I'm coming from having had to get used to drag queens, too. But if this world isn't safe for drag queens, it isn't safe for any of us."

In the early days of the Gay Democratic Club, Harvey Milk was the public candidate, Britt the quiet organizer behind the scenes. Of Milk, Britt says, "He embodied gay self-respect; he had a sense that the '70s were a time when to be gay was the most exciting possible thing to be. It's easy to motivate people who really want something. But Harvey motivated people who had contempt for the political process, convincing them that their time was well spent."

Milk was a figure greatly loved by San Francisco's gay community, even more so after his unexpected death. Britt was initially uncomfortable trying to fill Harvey's shoes. "I spent a lot of time worrying about it," he says. "My strength has come as I quit playing those games."

"Harry's doing the same things Harvey did, but he's more quiet, more diplomatic," says a San Francisco lesbian. His diplomacy has turned out to be the key to broadening his support. Britt's campaign was endorsed by a whole new set of supporters who had trouble with Milk, such as the city labor council and the Black Leadership Forum. Britt's also worked to unify several formerly fractious city groups that make up San Francisco's loose left coalition. He works closely with Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden's Campaign for Economic Democracy and serves on the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee's national advisory council.

"I have never backed off from being called a socialist," he says, "but it's primarily due to wanting to disassociate myself from the alternatives. Social decisions must be made by the people affected by them, and not in terms of corporate priorities. We must democratize the political process to the point that people perceive government not as an alien entity out there but as something acting in our common interest."

Turning the language of the anti-gays back on them, Britt sees the politics of the '80s shaping up as a contrast between "naturalness" and "perversion." "Natural" solutions to problems serve people's needs—for example, a health care system that really keeps people healthy. "Perverved" solutions, such as nuclear power, or the draft, contain the seeds of destruction.

He's optimistic about this politics in spite of Ronald Reagan and the Moral Majority. "The right-wing backlash has no historical power. The historical energy is with us. The energy going into holding systems together that won't work is doomed. Don't get me wrong: I'm no Pollyanna. A lot happens down here at City Hall that's very discouraging. But historically, perversion does not work. And if you are plugged into those forces in history that are responding to human needs in an effective way, then you will be shaping the future." ■

Judy MacLean is a San Francisco writer.

Happy Holidays

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Haig is the biggest hawk of all

By John Judis

RONALD REAGAN'S CHOICE for Secretary of State was his most important Cabinet appointment. His choice for Defense Secretary, Caspar Weinberger, has not held any foreign affairs post, expected National Security Advisor Richard Allen served only briefly at a low level in the Richard Nixon administration, and Reagan himself has spent most of the last six years commuting between his Santa Barbara ranch and small-town award dinners. His Secretary of State can therefore be expected to occupy a position similar in importance to Henry Kissinger during the Gerald Ford administration or Dean Acheson and General George Marshall during Harry Truman's presidency.

It was clear after Nov. 4 that there were only two men in contention for the job: Bechtel vice-chairman George Shultz and former NATO commander Alexander Haig. On Nov. 28, Shultz withdrew his name from consideration. After a moment of doubt over Haig's Watergate past, Reagan announced his choice of Haig on Dec. 17.

Both Haig and Shultz had served in the Nixon administration—Shultz as head of the Office of Management and the Budget, Secretary of Labor and Secretary of the Treasury and Haig as Kissinger's aide and Nixon's chief of staff—but they represented quite different sides of the Nixon administration. In his

In Vietnam policy debates Haig was on the far right. He warned Nixon that Kissinger was "too anxious for a deal."

memoirs, Nixon speechwriter Raymond Price speaks of a "light side" and a "dark side" to the Nixon presidency. Reagan chose his Secretary of State from the dark side.

The candyass.

During the Nixon years, Shultz was principally concerned with foreign economic policy, but in cabinet discussions of Vietnam he sided with Melvin Laird and William Rogers, the administration "doves," against Nixon and Kissinger. Shultz also earned Nixon's ire (Nixon called him a "candyass" in one Watergate tape) for refusing to sack the Internal Revenue Service on Nixon's political opponents.

As a Bechtel executive, Shultz was known for favoring increased East-West trade—he was highly critical of the Carter administration's postponement in 1978 of a \$150-million oil technology contract with the Soviet Union and was a well-known foe of the 1974 Jackson-Vanik amendment that denied "most favored nation" status to the Soviet Union. He also supported a more concerted American effort to resolve the problem of Palestinian autonomy and was opposed to Israel's West Bank occupation.

Reagan's choice of Shultz was actively opposed by hardline supporters of Israel. "Gen. Haig's record on Middle East issues is positive. He does not have a pro-Arab record, like George Shultz or Caspar Weinberger," one Israeli official said. And he was also opposed by Republican conservatives and the *New Right*. The conservative weekly *Human*

Events editorialized that Shultz "has little appreciation of the Soviet threat." In the *National Review*, columnist Robert Novak charged Shultz with being "responsible for restrictive defense budgeting in the Nixon administration."

But perhaps the most telling vote against Shultz came from Nixon himself, who according to *Newsweek*, told Reagan that he didn't think Shultz was tough enough for Secretary of State. Nixon's choice was Alexander Haig.

Henry's Stalin.

Along with former Ford National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, Haig is a new breed of soldier-politician-diplomat. He graduated in 1947 from West Point, served with Gen. Douglas MacArthur in Japan, and—after fighting in the Korean War—got an M.A. in international relations from Georgetown University. During the John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson administrations, he was an assistant to Secretary of the Army Cyrus Vance and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. He was recommended to Kissinger in 1969 by former Johnson official Joseph Califano.

During the fierce debates on Vietnam policy that took place in the Nixon administration, Haig was usually on the far right. Former Kissinger aide Roger Morris referred to him as "Stalin to Henry's Lenin" and as providing for Kissinger "a litmus test on the right." In *Sideshow*, William Shawcross describes the encounter between Kissinger aide William Watts and Haig, after Watts had resigned over Nixon's 1970 decision to invade Cambodia. "In the White House Situation Room, [Watts] was confronted by Alexander Haig, who by contrast was delighted by Nixon's decision," Shawcross writes. "Haig barked at Watts that he could not resign: 'You've just had an order from your commander-in-chief.'"

During the climactic fall 1972 negotiations with North Vietnam and South Vietnamese president Nguyen Van Thieu, Haig was the most adamant about not abandoning Thieu. According to Morris, Haig warned Nixon that Kissinger was "too anxious for a deal." Haig was also reportedly a staunch proponent of the brutal Christmas bombing of Hanoi, which finally resulted in merely cosmetic changes in the October agreement with North Vietnam.

The ashes of Vietnam.

During his brief tenure as Ford's chief of staff, Haig tried to exercise the same uncontested authority that he had had during Nixon's final days. According to Ford aide Robert Hartmann, Ford finally lost his patience when Haig signed an order appointing Nixon speechwriter and ultra-rightist Patrick Buchanan to be ambassador to South Africa. (Hartmann also tells of how Haig "turned white" when he learned that Ford would recommend leniency for Vietnam deserters.)

As NATO commander for Ford and Jimmy Carter, Haig muted his own views, except on the danger of Communist participation in the French and Italian governments. In 1978 his remarks drew a rebuke from the French government. But when he resigned in January 1979, one source reported that he had "chafed over what he saw as Jimmy Carter's soft-line approach to the SALT talks, Soviet military buildups in Eastern Europe and Communist incursions in Africa and Central Asia."

In subsequent interviews, Haig gave some hint of his own convictions. "We've got to shed the sack cloth and ashes of our Southeast Asia involvement," Haig told *Newsweek*. In a February 1979 interview with *U.S. News and World Report*—well before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had prompted administration rethinking of the draft—Haig confessed guardedly that he was "somewhat

skeptical of the all-volunteer army."

Haig remains a firm believer in the Kissinger strategy of "linking" SALT negotiations with other aspects of Soviet-American relations. "The functional areas of arms control, monetary affairs, energy and security policy have got to be integrated," he told *Newsweek*. "How can you build a just and responsible relation with the Soviet Union under the rubric of detente if you proceed in an almost mindless way in functional areas—credit transfers, monetary affairs, arms transfers—while you simultaneously ignore blatant, illegal interventionism?"

Even as NATO commander, Haig indicated that the major threat to American security would likely occur in the Third World rather than Central Europe, and he proposed offsetting the "essential equivalence" in American and Soviet strategic forces with a greater American "regional military capability." "A myopic concentration on the Central European front at the expense of equal concern about our flanks would be self-deluding," he said in a 1978 interview. "I believe that we must be armed with regional military capabilities that would be employed as deterrent forces to prevent the escalation of Third World dynamics into major conflict."

As Secretary of State, Haig can be expected to stress a greater American military role in Third World conflicts—whether through aid, proxy, or even direct intervention. Like Kissinger or David Rockefeller, who appointed Haig

to the Chase Manhattan board of directors last February and lobbied Reagan vigorously on his behalf, Haig can be expected to underplay, if not dismiss, human rights diplomacy.

Watergate revisited.

Of course, Haig still must be confirmed by the Senate, which begins considering him on Jan. 9. In the wake of the Reagan landslide, the Democratic senators will probably not make an issue of Haig's hawkishness, but they can be expected to touch upon Haig's role in Watergate.

Haig will probably have to answer for the Nixon administration's wiretaps of enemy columnists and out-of-favor officials—Haig personally ordered, on Kissinger's or Nixon's instructions, 12 of the 17 taps. He may also have to reconstruct his June 4, 1973, conversation with Nixon in which he seems to be advising him on how to evade prosecution. And he may also have to recount his efforts to persuade Ford to grant Nixon a pardon.

But unless new evidence emerges, the Senate Democrats will be wary of putting Haig up against the wall. As a result, he will likely become Reagan's Secretary of State and the most powerful man in the Reagan cabinet—possibly the most powerful man in the administration itself.

Richard Nixon will never run for high office again. But Haig's confirmation will represent a vindication of his administration—and of its darker side.

Haig's appointment represents a vindication of the Nixon administration's darker side.



Wade Worat

IN THE NATION

THE CABINET

Score one for the 'wild men'

By Alexander Cockburn
& James Ridgeway

NEW YORK

LOOKING SLIGHTLY OUT OF place amid the venerable titans so far mustered by Ronald Reagan to his cabinet is David Stockman, the 34-year-old Michigan congressman and director-designate of the Office of Management and Budget. Stockman is one of the group—known colloquially as the “wild men”—clustered around Rep. Jack Kemp of New York, the publicist Jude Wanniski and the tax-cutting notions of Arthur Laffer.

So far, Stockman represents the major victory of the wild men in the battle for influence in the impending Reagan administration. His major in-house opponent will be the traditionalists' prize, in the form of Don Regan, the boss of Merrill Lynch, now on his way to the Treasury. Stockman is toasted by his adherents as a master of the budgetary labyrinth, who could become the Robespierre of Reaganomics in action, hacking expertly at the budgets and regulations of a generation's worth of Big Government. Along with Kemp he prepared an important transition paper for Reagan, saying that the nation faced an “economic

your point of view is presently equipped to stand up to the pressures from the business-as-usual crowd?

The question is: can it survive the first six months of transition or will the forces of the status quo and the various establishments of finance and business and labor demand so much, or oppose so heavily, that a coherent program breaks apart into just gestures in a lot of different directions. It all depends on the state of the world, the economy.

What are the important issues that might make this election the harbinger of change rather than the ratification of the status quo and of business as usual?

You mean a little scorecard? Well, I think the status quo will return increasingly to protectionism, a Kemp-Laffer policy would turn away from it. I think the status quo forces, for a consensus policy, would turn increasingly to what has been called reindustrialization policy. Reindustrialization policy is just a game for hyping the political control over the

bringing tripartite governance into the economy, rather than market governance.

You think the status quo can be challenged?

You can have a government of the status quo, with fat corporate lobbyists and consultants, or a government that fundamentally challenges the status quo.... That's the reason why the establishment Democratic politicians and economists who have been close to government for a long time don't want tax cuts. They're afraid they can't fund their programs and they've got to keep the whole structure intact. This is not purely income transfers and welfare programs either. It's all these mammoth programs in every area. It makes them a conservative party, defending the status quo.

But the status quo also involves the interests of big corporations, who are not exactly removed from the Republican Party either. How do you deal with them?

A fierce budget slasher, David Stockman could become the Robespierre of Reaganomics.



Dunkirk” and recommending resolute speedy action—budget slicing and tax cutting.

Stockman was one of the major architects of the Republican platform as promulgated in Detroit last July. He wrote the section on energy, the Magna Carta of the oil and gas industry. A former aide to John Anderson, he was one of Reagan's sparring partners before the two debates.

He is as fierce a budget slasher as any conservative could desire, but his global fix appears somewhat different. In person and demeanor he is not a chiselled Republican establishment banker/child-starver but an affable and dexterous ideologue of the right. During the campaign we had a long talk with him, in which he measured the tasks and battles that lay ahead.

Do you think the Reagan group from

forces of the economy and for preserving the weakest assets in the economy.

Dead-ass industries?

Yes. George Gilder says government is a conspiracy against the future forced on a society by the powers of the past. That's essentially what you'd get. Now they have all kinds of fancy names for it, and it would be called a cooperative arrangement between industry and government. There would be much rhetoric about the Japanese model, and it wouldn't be called central planning or such other nasty socialistic words, but targeted incentives or some such thing. That would be another test: are you going toward reducing the burdens on economic activity and commerce in this huge economy, or are you going toward increasing it indirectly with what would be called a reindustrialization policy, a sector policy, targeted incentives, subventions, protections,

The big disciplining force you need with big corporations is not some guy running around the FTC cooking up novel antitrust actions, not even vigorous traditional antitrust enforcement. What you need is an open market, and nonprotectionist policies.

Let's look at autos. The UAW has argued that there have got to be temporary protectionist measures to get the industry on its feet.

If you look at the record, once the premise that an industry needs protection is granted, it is never withdrawn. Look at textiles. In the early '60s Kennedy negotiated the long-term textile agreement and the thing has just become a standard part of the landscape. The textile industry has to have protection. Nobody ever changes it. The same thing would be true of autos. After 1983, if they did get retooled and you had a new fleet of dom-

estic cars that were fairly competitive the companies would find some other reason: the Japanese are putting in more subsidies or whatever.

What's your attitude to labor?

That's a novel development in the Republican Party. Republican orators for years have been attacking unions and wages and especially union settlements as being inflationary, and it's a lot of baloney. Actually, the best economists say unions don't even raise wages much above what they would be in a nonunionized market. What they do is give some stability to the labor force. In some ways they're almost an extension of management. You've got a very large institution—a GM, or a Ford, or a U.S. Steel—and the unions are a way of regularizing relationships and handling grievances, systematically setting wages. There's nothing wrong with it.

They're going to put the unions on the corporate board? That's fine. If they want to use the more traditional model, which is somewhat more of an adversary system within a private context, that's fine. I don't think it's any great panacea or any great threat. The main thing is that you can't allow private parties to establish government-sanctioned monopolies. That is the force in all industrial democracies today. Efforts by management and unions and their suppliers and all their dependent communities. They use the power of the government, whether through subsidy or through protecting the borders, to allow them to gain more, either through profits, wages, or market shares, than they are entitled to on the basis of their performance. My view, and I could be wrong, is that this happened in spades in Great Britain and the economy rotted right out from under them.

What is the proper role of government?

There's a major residual role for government. But it certainly is not the source for innovation, technology, production growth, expansion. The role of government is to take care of—besides all the traditional things—externalities in a market economy. No firm is going to have a safe workplace unless the government requires it. No firm is going to use the collective resources of society prudently—air, water, land—unless the government establishes limits.

Who defines the market, and its rules?

I suppose the government has got to set some terms, enforcement of contracts and that kind of thing. But you don't have to structure competition. That's where I disagree with the whole antitrust tradition, which has been very strong in the Hart subcommittee, the FTC bureau of competition. That's wrong. My view is that a monopoly never develops unless it's sanctioned by government authority. There's no such thing as a privately developed and composed monopoly.

Well, what about the early Standard Oil trust?

You can go into a long debate about history. In modern times, in a global economy with multinational corporations and the swift ability to deploy capital and production all around the globe, you don't have monopoly. So you don't have to define the rules of the game in terms of competition.

Well, this antitrust stuff does seem to be just make-work for lawyers.

Yes. They work one side of the street for about five years, then they go to the other side of the street and they know how to defend against the new doctrines, the twists and angles that they put in at the FTC or the Justice Department five years ago. It's a self-feeding process. It's totally useless and a sink of economic resources and wealth we can do without.

How about paying for all the defense, with the tax cut and balancing the budget. How's Reagan going to answer that?

At the rhetorical level, you've got to defend it artfully. At the policy level, it doesn't matter.

So how do you defend it artfully?

Well, in the Carter administration, policies were probably losing \$300 billion to \$400 billion a year in GNP in the form of idled factories, idled labor, resources that aren't being deployed. Our tax and

Continued on the facing page

New technology gets politics

By Claire Greensfelder

AUSTIN, TEXAS

THE ALTERNATIVE ENERGY movement is a young one, relatively speaking. It is barely a decade old, and has only been federally subsidized in any significant way in the last four years. Yet a major energy conference in Austin in December showed that the movement has already matured and is gearing up for some crucial fights about the U.S.'s energy future, what it will look like, and who it will benefit.

In the past, proponents of solar, geothermal, wind and other alternative energy (A/E) systems have been characterized as apolitical and often isolated in their own, specialized experimental projects. The Austin gathering belied that image. Organized by the Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies (CASLP), it drew over 300 state and local political leaders, policy makers, labor representatives, energy experts and activists who believe that the alternative energy issue should be central to political debates of the next decade.

Some speakers suggested that the A/E movement offers a vision of the future much like what 1980 voters were looking for: a traditional, conservative vision of decentralization, local control and individual ownership of production. David Morris, director of the Institute for Local Self Reliance, remarked on the fact that solar photovoltaic cells now cost a mere 2 percent of what they did in 1974. He described a future scene of 20 million small power producers selling their power back to local utilities.

John Alschuler of the Hartford Policy Center made a plea for making energy the campaign issue of the '80s: "Energy decides painfully few elections," he said in the opening plenary. "Our agenda has to be overtly political. If we are to be credible, we must place local efforts in the national political scene." Alschuler later told *In These Times*, "The voters went for the clarity of Reagan's definition of the problem. It is our solutions that are different."

In general, there was little discussion of nuclear power. "We just cannot debate nuclear while we are fighting for increased solar and alternative technologies," Dayton City Commissioner Pat Roach told the group. And Harold Tate of the Texas AFL-CIO expressed a reluctant but clear support of nuclear power as a necessary evil that is with us for some time to come.

But Tina Hobson of the Department of Consumer Affairs of the U.S. Department of Energy cited recent polls showing that 50 percent of the population is concerned about one part or another of the nuclear process. In her recent report to the Reagan transition team, she stated clearly, "If you shut the door on the consumer groups who are concerned about nuclear, there will be serious repercussions." And she added, "Although there is growing anti-nuclear feeling across the country, there is already unanimous interest in community-based technology. Even the Daughters of the American Revolution have recently formed an 'energy and ethics' committee to develop recycling and other local projects.

Making it work locally.

Workshops offered many case studies in innovative community and state energy projects. Duane Gautier of the New Jersey State Department of Energy described how, by mandating energy audits and feasibility studies for solar hot water at the time of sale, the department will be able to reach 90 percent of the housing stock in the state over the next 10 years.

Pliny Fisk and Cali Vittori of the Center for Maximal Potential Building Systems in Austin described their innovative programs using almost entirely recycled



Valerie Pope-Ludlam helped organize a local solar industry in a low-income San Bernadino, Calif., community.

and indigenous materials to construct solar collectors and wood-burning stoves, thus stimulating local jobs and providing low-cost energy. They have built a small solar factory for only \$3,500 in Crystal City, Texas, and expect four workers to produce 600 collectors a year—completely solarizing a small town of 2,000-3,000 families in three or four years.

One of the most inspiring case studies

presented was that of the San Bernadino Community Development Corporation. Valerie Pope-Ludlam, executive director of the SB/CDC and national board member of Minorities Organized for Renewable Energy, told the conference of her journey from black welfare mother to housing and jobs activist and finally to solar development as a means of providing both affordable housing and job-

training for her low-income community. "When I started in the early '70s, I didn't know solar from shinola," she said.

Today Ludlam's project has trained over 600 CETA workers in solar energy jobs and rehabbed over 700 housing units in San Bernadino. They now own and operate their own solar industry and work in partnership with many local agencies and unions.

A common strategy.

Many groups came to the conference prepared with local and national strategies for 1981. Heather Booth, executive director of the Citizens/Labor Energy Coalition (C/LEC) proposed a detailed and well organized campaign to "break the Solar Bank" in 1981. With an appropriation of only \$125 million to start, the bank is supposed to provide loans for small solar enterprises and projects nationwide. C/LEC hopes to organize a massive application effort that will demonstrate to Congress, on the first day of the program, that the allocation is woefully inadequate.

Lee Webb, director of CASLP, told the conference, "First we must hold the line on energy prices, developing life-line rates and outlawing winter shutoffs. Second, create a growing, vibrant solar industry that is well financed and locally based by means of state venture capital, cooperative ventures and redirection of existing capital such as pension funds—prohibiting utilities and oil companies from solar manufacturing by means of class-action suits by state attorney generals. Third, create a growing market for solar consumer protection."

Webb, echoing others at the conference, stressed progressive use of state and local bonding authorities to create new jobs.

Claire Greensfelder is on the energy advisory committee of the American Friends Service Committee in San Francisco.

CASLP published an excellent 500-page reader for the Austin conference. Contact them at 2000 Florida Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20009.

Montana dumping ban squeaks by

By McCarthy Coyle

MISSOULA, MONT.

MANY MONTANANS ARE calling their state "Nuclear-Free America" following an unexpected turnaround in the November election results. A Montana initiative against the dumping of radioactive waste in the nation's fourth largest state was initially reported to have lost by a narrow margin (*In These Times*, Nov. 19, 1980).

But write-in votes and absentee ballots tipped the balance, and the official canvass—certified by the Secretary of State Dec. 8—showed the anti-dumping measure passed by a razor-thin margin of 416 ballots out of 345,402 cast.

Montana has substantial deposits of uranium ore, and while the new law does not ban mining outright, it is seen as an effective barrier to uranium extraction projects since the cost of shipping waste tailings out of state are prohibitive.

The successful campaign—spearheaded by the Headwaters Alliance—shows that big-dollar advertising campaigns don't always prevail: Headwaters was outspent 56 to one. A healthy coalition of left activists and more conservative ranchers and wheat-growers, Headwaters already had a track record in the state. Two years ago it led the initiative victory that requires a majority of Montana voters to approve the siting of any nuclear power plant. That measure won by a two-to-one margin.

In addition, the city of Missoula, Headwaters' home base, has a local ordinance that bans the transport of radioactive materials through the community. Since Interstate 90—the major east-west route to Hanford, Wash.—runs through Missoula, this is yet another thorn in the side of the nuclear industry. The city's law is being challenged in court.

These anti-nuclear measures may seem

a curious anomaly in a state that has one of the largest military nuclear arsenals in the world. Minuteman missile silos dot the northern Great Plains around Great Falls, home of Malmstrom Air Force Base.

But the conservationist tide in Montana is a strong one. The state constitution, rewritten in 1972, is the strongest pro-environmental document in the U.S.

Montana, of course, remains an energy development battleground. Government and corporate policy-makers have referred to the state as a "national sacrifice area" when proposing that several synfuel plants be located in this, one of the nation's largest wheat-growing regions.

Underneath the wheat is the nation's largest low-sulphur coal reserve. The utilities want this coal. What they don't want is the 30 percent severance tax Montana

recently imposed on coal extraction.

The utilities' challenge to the tax will be heard by the Supreme Court this term. And if the power companies don't succeed in the courts, they have Congress as a backup. Already this term the Senate entertained a number of proposals to put a lid on state mineral severance taxes.

Meanwhile the Montana alliances that made the anti-nuclear victories possible are also fighting other battles: the Northern Tier pipeline, the exploitation of several Montana Indian nations by oil and gas developers, and a multinational mindset that still sees the resource-rich area as a Third World country. Not for nothing is Montana called the "Treasure State."

McCarthy Coyle is a correspondent for MQ/TV, a public interest TV company in Missoula.

Stockman

Continued from facing page
economic policies will liberate those resources plus a surge in economic activity will more than adequately finance the defense increases that we're calling for. When the economy is this deep in recession there's no problem.

But this would take place over three or four years, and in the meantime you would have a gap.

Yes, you've got some deficits. All the greatest projects of economic advancement in history have been financed by debt, from the U.S. railroads to all the major industries.

So you're opposed to rhetoric about the balanced budget?

The Keynesian orthodoxy is that if you are running an expansionary fiscal policy you've got to accommodate it with an expansionary monetary policy. That creates inflation and screws up everything you're trying to do. So if you drop

that premise and you don't monetize the debt, you run monetary policy without regard to business cycles, without regard to states of demand last week and next month and the first quarter of next year, with the exclusive rate and the price level stable. Then the larger deficits that are accompanied by expansionary policy are not that bothersome.

For the first two years Reagan can say that it's the inherited legacy of bankrupt economic policies that brought the economy to its knees. I'm talking politically. Reagan has said many times that rejuvenating the economy, reigniting the forces of expansion, have primacy over the accounting balance of the federal sector. I think by January we will have such a deep inherited deficit that as a practical matter you can blame it on your predecessor for quite some time. The rhetoric last spring about the balanced budget is going to be just a distant echo on the pages of a history book.

Alexander Cockburn and James Ridgeway write a regular column for the *Village Voice*, where this interview first appeared.

IN THE WORLD



ITALY

Disaster relief does not run on time in disinherited south

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

THE EARTHQUAKE THAT DEVASTATED a vast area of southern Italy last Nov. 23 has badly shaken the political landscape. Like the modern, barely reinforced concrete buildings that fell in quicker than centuries-old houses, the disaster laid bare the flimsy structure of the state in the Mezzogiorno, Italy's disinherited deep south.

Not that the structural flaws in the 35-year-old Italian government system based on Christian Democratic patronage were any secret before the disaster. In fact, the country was absorbed in unraveling a gigantic petroleum company embezzlement scandal involving much of the ruling political class when the tremors hit. The long-running Italian farce of *malgoverno* suddenly turned to tragedy.

The seismic shock struck Naples, but hit especially hard at the hinterland of remote ancient villages perched on the rugged hilltops of Campania and Basilicata provinces, the region beyond Eboli (described in Carlo Levi's book *Christ Stopped at Eboli* that was recently made into a film). In this region, able-bodied men mostly go off looking for work in Turin, Milan or Germany—even Buenos Aires and New York. Those left behind are mostly children, women and old people. When their houses tumbled down, the survivors, without excavating tools, were helpless to save their relatives who called out from the rubble, "Good Christians, come and help!"

Help did not come for days and days. The death toll, now at around 3,000, is still not complete, and there is no doubt that many could have been saved if rescue efforts had been faster and more efficient. Incredibly, regional government agencies seemed completely unprepared to deal with an earthquake disaster—even though that part of Italy is well known to be the center of seismic disturbances

caused by the African continental plate crunching against Europe, and, in fact, laws were passed 10 years ago to set up earthquake emergency aid centers. The first rescue workers to reach many villages were volunteers from the Communist Youth Federation or other private civic organizations, or even emigrant workers who rushed all the way home from Germany to look for their parents.

The army finally arrived, but much more slowly and less well equipped than for the less extensive earthquakes in the northeastern Friuli region four years ago. Government spokesmen blamed the delays on the bad roads and severe winter weather, but to southerners this was just another instance of being neglected and mistreated by a government they have mistrusted as an alien conqueror since the unification of modern Italy. To much of the rest of the country, it was the disgraceful sign of a corrupt and incompetent government that misuses the nation's resources and talents and makes it a laughing stock of the Western world. Why, for instance, when the Italian armed forces have 654 helicopters, were only 27 assigned to rescue operations during the critical 48 hours after the first seismic shocks?

One of the things that work very well in Italy is the news media. Television cameramen and reporters beat rescue teams to the scene and sent out heart-rending images of grief-stricken and increasingly enraged survivors without shelter, food or even shovels. Donations poured into relief funds, and, as usual, private citizens pitched in with that inventiveness that has given Italy its reputation as the only country that doesn't really need a government. But the lack of coordination meant efforts were wasted. Generously donated aid was hauled around aimlessly between traffic jams and road blocks.

The president breaks ranks.

Taken on a helicopter tour of ruined villages, Italy's righteous old president San-

dro Pertini was horrified. They don't make many like Pertini any more. Elected to the largely figurehead office a couple of years ago in an amazing burst of parliamentary purity to replace corrupt Christian Democratic president Giovanni Leone, the 86-year-old Socialist Pertini is one of the last active survivors of the civic-minded generation that fought



against Fascism and gave the post-war Italian republic a genuinely democratic constitution.

In the wrecked villages, people shouted to Pertini that they wanted help, not words. The old man had little to reply, but when he got back to Rome, he grimly prepared and broadcast a television speech to the nation without consulting prime minister Arnaldo Forlani or his cabinet.

Pertini took it upon himself to express the victims' complaints without defending the government. He reported that in a region where whole villages were leveled, "48 hours after the disaster, the necessary aid had not arrived.... From the rubble were still rising moans and cries of despair from people buried alive, and furious survivors told me, 'We don't have the tools to save our relatives, to dig them out of the rubble!'" Pertini

asked why the 1970 law on natural calamities had never been put into effect, why there was no sign of the emergency aid centers provided by that law, why no food provisions had reached the victims 48 hours after the disaster. Finally, he demanded punishment for whoever was responsible for "grave failings."

The speech had a strong impact. The press and public mostly applauded the president for speaking plainly. But Pertini's accusations threw Christian Democratic leaders into a frenzy. Interior minister Virginio Rognoni very nearly resigned in a huff and others hinted anonymously that Pertini should be impeached for senility. Socialists in the coalition government, especially defense minister Lelio Lagorio and Gianni De Michelis, in charge of state industries, also sharply reprimanded the president for lack of solidarity with the government.

But the rest of the left sided with Pertini. Socialist Party leader Bettino Craxi called Pertini's reaction "very sincere and human" and said that the confused handling of the earthquake had simply brought out once again the tremendous mess in southern Italy and the "fearful decadence" of Italian institutions. Craxi warned that Italy was suffering from a civic disintegration reminiscent of the Weimar Republic before the rise of Nazism. "When a state loses authority, when the forces representing a society no longer have clear goals, then everything gets out of control, irrational impulses can take over and let loose destructive tensions." The Socialist leader warned that "if we don't block this descent into hell, the republic risks collapse."

The legacy of corruption.

The indignant government ministers probably also felt they were doing the best they could. The confusion of the disaster aid was the product of a whole system of bad government based on favors and patronage. The government hastened to allocate billions of lire for disaster relief. In the next year and a half, an estimated \$20 billion in aid and reconstruction funds may pour into the Irpinia and Basilicata regions—an unprecedented sum that might, if properly managed, pull the region out of its centuries-old poverty. But if business goes as usual, it is likelier to enrich speculators, fraudulent contractors and corrupt politicians. Already rival leaders of the Camorra, the Neapolitan mafia, were bumping each other off in hopes of cornering lucrative new rackets. In his television speech, Pertini asked what had ever become of the funds appropriated nearly 13

The left parties charged that bungled rescue efforts exposed the "fearful decadence" of Italian institutions.

years ago to rebuild homes destroyed by an earthquake in the Sicilian village of Belice. Belice people are still camped in corrugated metal shacks while judicial investigators try periodically to pick up the trail of the vanished reconstruction funds. One local Christian Democrat commented that "we didn't need the earthquake to find out that real estate speculation is the economic motor of the Mezzogiorno."

Southern distrust of the government is so great that even when government teams finally arrived in the disaster area, people refused to do what they were told. Army evacuation plans were stalled because villagers stubbornly refused to budge from the ruins of their homes, even though they were freezing and destitute. In northern Friuli, people behaved differently. But in the South, villagers

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THE PERSIAN GULF

Problems of re-supply set limits on Mideast conflict



Ayatollah Khomeini

By Fred Halliday

L O N D O N

TWO MONTHS AFTER THE IRAQI invasion of Iran on Sept. 22, it appears that both sides may be digging in for a long war. Like the European power that started fighting in September 1914 and expected a victory before Christmas, the protagonists in this conflict must now face the uncertainty of months—even years—of fighting, wearing away at each other's positions in the hope that, finally, either the war front or the home front of their enemy will crack.

But there is one major difference between World War I and this conflict. Whereas both Iran and Iraq have used their oil revenues to equip comparatively large armies decked out with the most modern equipment, both remain basically weak economies, unable to draw additional military supplies from within their own productive systems. They cannot sustain the initial level of fighting without re-supply from abroad—and that appears, so far, to be lacking.

Iran and Iraq are seeking arms from allies and on the open market. But as long as the major powers keep out of the conflict, the two countries' own shortcomings in military production will act as a brake upon their offensive capacity.

Economic weakness also accounts for two other factors. The first is the relatively limited effect the war has had on life away from the front lines and the constraints operating on both sides' military deployment. By all reports, life in Tehran and Baghdad continues almost as normal, and neither side has committed more than a fraction of the weaponry and the troops technically at its disposal. It cannot be a total war—a war of full mobilization—because, as far as the economy is concerned, there is relatively

little that can be mobilized.

On the other hand—and this is the second factor—both sides must be aware that they can play on the economic vulnerability of the other to force a quicker solution. Since Iran and Iraq are both overwhelmingly dependent on oil revenues, even to pay for massive food imports, a protracted cutoff of oil production would not only limit domestic fuel supplies, but also undermine the entire economy, which has little productive capacity without assistance from oil revenues.

Here the Iraqis are at an advantage over the Iranians. With a population of around 13 million, they are believed to have \$35 billion—or nearly two years' revenues—in the bank. Moreover, they have been able to continue some oil exports, via the pipeline to Lebanon, because their production areas are dispers-

ed and away from the site of fighting. And even if they did face serious revenue and production problems, one could expect other friendly Arab states, and in particular Saudi Arabia, to help out.

Iran's cash reserves are believed to be made up of about \$6 billion in Europe, and up to \$13 billion in U.S. banks. But the latter assets, so far, remain frozen, and with a population of 38 million, Iran's foreign exchange needs are proportionately larger than Iraq's. Its oil fields, concentrated in the province of Khuzestan, have been badly hit by the Iraqi invasion. Iran is also relatively

friendless, and no one in the Middle East—apart from Libya, with which it has a lukewarm alliance—could provide the financial or fuel assistance needed to ride out a protracted interruption in oil production. If the Iraqi economy so far appears relatively immune from the war, that of Iran appears to have suffered less than might be expected. It seems that some domestic oil production and refining continues, enough at least for basic domestic needs. Private cars are rationed to 30 liters of gasoline a month, and there is a limit on the kerosene supplies that so many Iranians use for domestic energy. There has been a run on bank deposits and some food hoarding. But the urban economy has not ground to a halt, and small amounts of oil are still being exported via a supplementary loading platform away from the fighting area.

But in the longer run the destruction of the Abadan refinery and the disruption of oil exports will hit the state badly, depriving Iran of the \$13 billion it had hoped to earn in the current year. And the fighting has created a massive refugee problem with up to a million people fleeing Iraqi artillery. The fact that many of these refugees from such towns as Khorramshahr, Abadan and Ahvaz are ethnically Arab—the very people the Iraqis are supposed to be liberating—is an ironic comment on the war.

Indeed, whether by design or accident, the Iraqis have achieved one of the major prerequisites for any successful occupation of foreign territory, namely to empty it of its native inhabitants. As the Turks have discovered in Cyprus, this is the easiest way to secure an occupation.

It appears that the Iraqis have organized massive construction operations in the territory they have seized in order to build a new network of roads, bridges and barracks that would facilitate a long stay. In the weeks since the outbreak of the fighting they have also begun to drop hints about their right to alter the status of Khuzestan—or, as they call it, "Arabestan"—and their position on the ground there appears to be strong.

The wars at home.

The political impact of the war within the two countries is as yet uncertain. As in the European war of 1914-1918, prolonged conflict can produce big swings in public sentiment—from the extremes of patriotic unity to social upheavals of the kind that swept away the monarchies of Russia and Germany. While apparently secure at the moment, both regimes could see popular sentiment turn against them in a drawn-out war.

On the Iraqi side—where politics has

"Full mobilization" is impossible for the weak, lopsided economies of Iraq and Iran, which have relatively little to mobilize.

long been cloaked in a terroristic security—no overt signs of opposition have emerged. There have been unconfirmed reports of new arrests and executions in major cities, and of the killing of a prominent general who opposed the war. But other reports speak of sustained nationalistic identification with the regime.

The Communist Party of Iraq, along with Kurdish groups, democratic groups, the Democratic Party and the Unified Socialist Party, have gotten together in exile to form a Democratic Iraqi Front. Based in Syria, it has called for the overthrow of the Baathist regime and support

for the Iranian revolution. But it does not visibly command an active following inside Iraq, and it does not include the Shi'ite Muslim underground grouping, *Al-da'wah*, which is supported by Iran and whose guerrilla campaign inside Iraq was one of the factors precipitating this war.

Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein does not seem to have met serious political difficulties at home, and he appears to have insulated the population from the effects of the war. The longer-run impact, given the conspiratorial methods his opponents would have to use, remains unpredictable.

In Iran, the Iraqi attack at first produced an appearance of unity as many thousands of young men rushed to the front. Both the Islamic guards and the militias of the left-wing parties played an important role in the first weeks of fighting. It looked, for a time, as though the Iraqis had replayed the U.S. blunder at the Bay of Pigs. But the divisions of the pre-war period have now re-opened in an even sharper form.

The basic dividing line is between the followers of Premier Rajai and the Islamic Republican Party of Ayatollah Beheshti on one side, and the followers of President Bani-Sadr on the other. The Islamic hardliners seem to have the upper hand in the streets and easier access to the ear of Khomeini: they have fought off attempts by Bani-Sadr to nominate members to the new cabinet. After eight weeks of wrangling, Iran still does not have a foreign minister, and the previous occupant of the post, Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, was even arrested by right-wing vigilantes after he criticized the clerics' control of the media.

The right-wing forces have also received support from much of the secular left—in particular the Tudeh (Communist) Party, the majority faction of the Fedayin guerrillas, and the Mojahidin guerrillas. These groups argue that Bani-Sadr is supported by the "liberal bourgeoisie," a

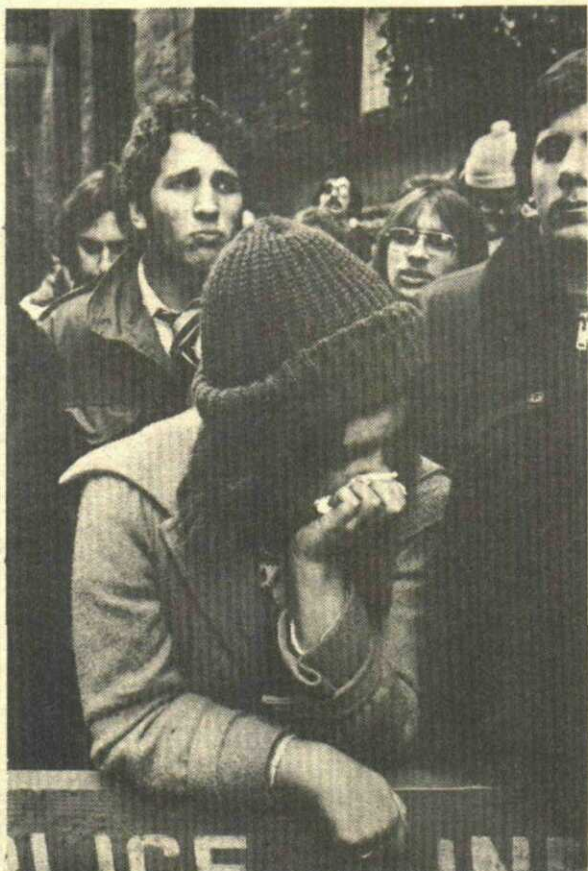
Saddam Hussein



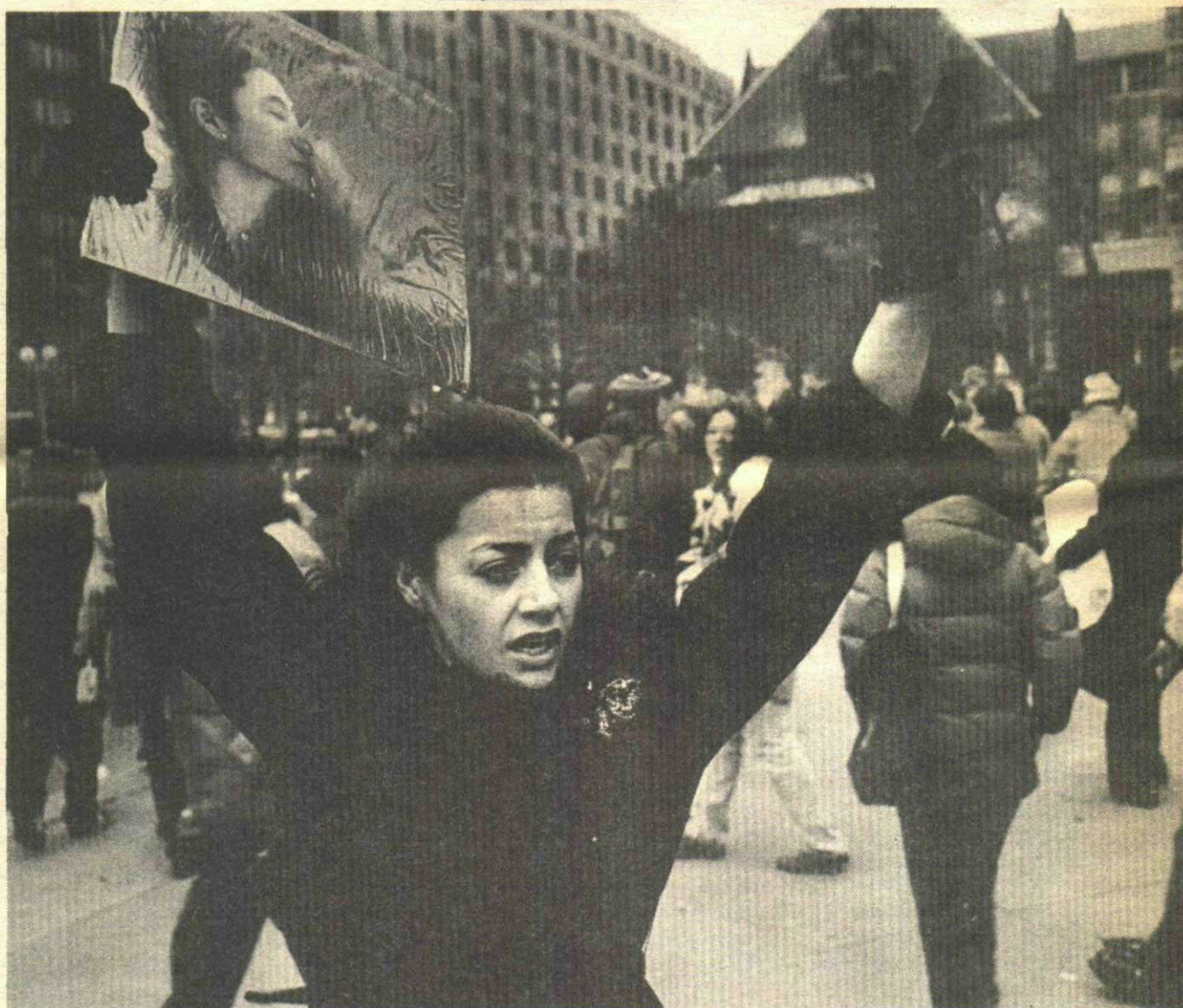
special group still linked to the West that wants to block the continuation of the revolution. The minority of the Fedayin and the Paikay group, which broke from the Mojahidin in 1975, take an even more militant position that the whole regime—Rajai as much as Bani-Sadr—is tied to bourgeois and imperialist interests and should be remorselessly opposed. Both views expose a facile class reductionism.

The fragmentation of the left, like that of the Islamic camp, has been accelerated by the war. In one sense, the fate of the Fedayin is like that of many other unaffiliated and politically utopian left youth movements that emerged from dictatorships in southern Europe in the 1970s—for example, in Greece, Spain and Portugal. Lacking an experienced political leadership, they were in the end broken up by the competing attractions of other, older-style but tougher-minded, political formations. The Fedayin majority are now in many respects aligned with the Tudeh party, while the minority, led by the followers of the guerrilla theorist Jazani, continue to believe in the possibility of an independent revolutionary line that they cannot translate into a coherent program.

Continued on page 14



New York, New York
George Cohen/Picture Group



Boston, Massachusetts
Peter Taylor/Picture Group

By Bruce Dancis

I cannot recall a time when so many friends and acquaintances have been chilled with the same grief and sense of loss. The sadness over John Lennon's death at times feels almost unbearable. If it is the burden of leftists in America to have had to steel ourselves against tragedy, human suffering and countless disappointments, then why does this stoic reserve crumble in the face of one man's murder? Why is it impossible to listen to the Beatles or Lennon's post-Beatle records without having your eyes blur over? And if it's only love, then why should we feel the way we do?

Less emotional and more substantive assessments of John Lennon's career will have to come later, when the shock and outrage over his killing subside. No doubt they will examine the Beatles' effect on the tastes, values and world view not only of the generation that came of age in the 1960s, but, as the massive outpouring of grief reminds us, of millions of people throughout the world.

As influential as the Beatles were to many of us—not as gurus or prophets, but as harbingers of change—we also exerted a profound impact on them. No one understood this better than John, as he showed in his and Yoko Ono's extraordinary interview in the current issue of *Playboy*:

"Whatever wind was blowing at the time moved the Beatles, too. I'm not saying we weren't flags on the top of a ship; but the whole boat was moving. Maybe the Beatles were in the crow's nest, shouting, 'Land ho,' or something like that, but we were all in the same damn boat."

Like so many, John was constantly searching and growing, a process in which, like many others, he often looked foolish. His explorations saw him undergo startling changes in his appearance, and carried him into contact with a Maharishi, psychedelics and primal therapy.

Those of us in the New Left and the peace movement shared a special relationship with Lennon, one that changed over time and was often filled with paradox and ambivalence. For several years in the mid-'60s, Lennon and the other Beatles withheld from the public (at the insistence of manager Brian Epstein) their strong opposition to the war in Vietnam, although the famous censored album cover for *Yesterday and Today*—in which the Beatles appeared in butcher aprons covered with blood, hunks of meat and dismembered baby dolls—was an attempt to express their viewpoint indirectly. There was the gently mocking "Revolution," released in September 1968 as a slightly contemptuous response to the international student uprisings of that year, but tempered on a different version of the song that appeared on the "White Album" several months later where the "out" from "but when you talk about destruction, don't you know that you can count me out," was followed by a clearly spoken "in."

Lennon became more explicitly political in the late '60s/early '70s, a change that coincided with his relationship with Ono, a politically radical

avant-garde artist who also happened to be a cousin of Shin'ya Ono, a *Studies on the Left* editor and future Weatherman. From this time came the moving and insightful "Working Class Hero," the Movement anthems "Give Peace a Chance" and "Imagine," which, if not profound, served as needed unifiers within the peace movement, and an album, *Some Time in New York City*, devoted to protest songs about Attica, the oppression of women, Northern Ireland and other issues.

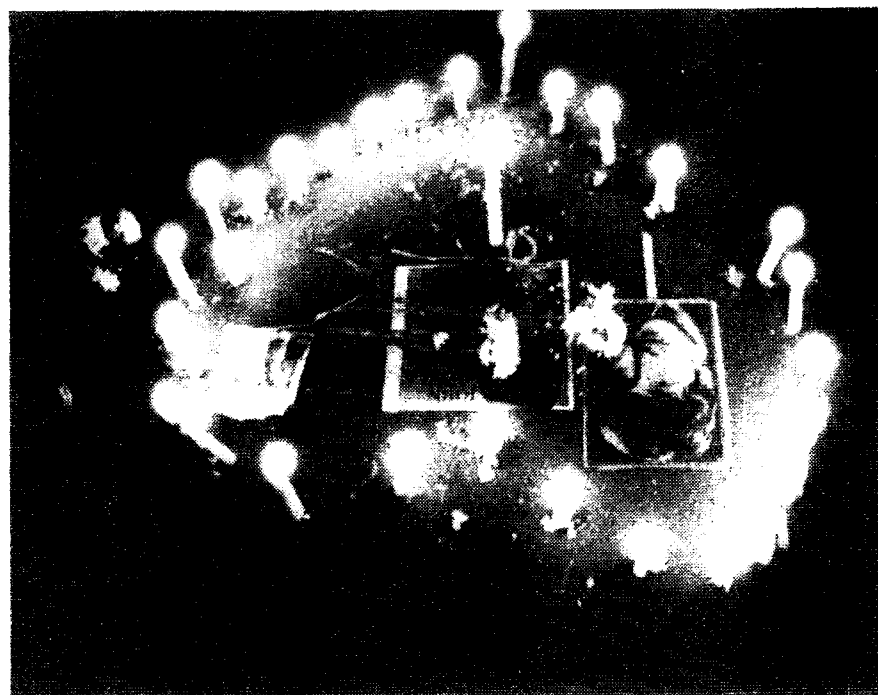
If Lennon's alliance with the Yippies represented a disappointing choice of comrades, and his and Ono's week-long "bed-in" for peace generated considerable ridicule—in other words, if he was not immune to the self-righteousness and self-delusion that afflicted many of us at the time—what other musicians or entertainers of close-to-comparable stature risked their careers because of their political beliefs?

John, like many of his male contemporaries, was profoundly affected by the women's movement and Yoko's feminism. Except for his recent work with Ono on *Double Fantasy*, Lennon spent the last five years of his life outside of the public view, raising their child and working as a househusband. He had seemingly come to grips with both his legacy as a Beatle and the contradictions of being a self-described socialist who was also incredibly wealthy.

The timing and location of Lennon's death—coming shortly on the heels of the Reagan landslide and taking place in America—add to its poignancy. To a certain extent, the 1980 election repudiated many of the hopes and aspirations of the 1960s, and brought with it a



Austin, Texas
Scott Van Osdol



Boston, Massachusetts
Tyrone Hall/Picture Group



and the Everly Brothers, and then went on to create a whole new sound of their own. Others will never forget the beauty and wisdom of particular songs like "In My Life," or the innocent charm of "I Want to Hold Your Hand," or the imaginative "A Day in the Life."

Through all of the unprecedented fame he received as a Beatle, Lennon always insisted that the public recognize that he and his partners were human—and in some ways this may be his most profound contribution. In the mid-'60s the Beatles were bigger than Jesus (although Jesus made a comeback in the next decade), yet Lennon's wonderful irreverence and wisecracking humor struck hard against attempts at deification.

The Beatles defined rock as a collective experience, the result of the joint creativity of a group of musicians, while at the same time each member retained his individuality and distinctiveness. John always seemed to understand that, although the Beatles might have been the best and most popular rock band in history, they were still just a rock band, just four blokes.

Lennon often looked back with bitterness toward his years as a Beatle, in part because of the conflict that arose within the band over his relationship with Ono, but also out of a sense that it was destructive to be locked into the past. Up to his death, he remained sharply critical of any suggestion that the Beatles should re-group, yet he seemed to be willing, finally, to acknowledge the Beatles' unparalleled achievements.

The feeling one takes from *Double Fantasy* is that Lennon and Ono were filled with a renewed sense of optimism and that John, despite having so much behind him, was still searching, growing and fighting. In the *Playboy* interview, John said that "Imagine" would stand with the best songs he ever wrote. None so clearly expressed his hope for humankind:

New York, New York
Bryce Flynn/Picture Group



*Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace . . .*

*Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world . . .*

*You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope some day you'll join us
And the world will be as one*

We shall miss him very much.

Bruce Dancis is a rock journalist in San Francisco.

depression so contrary to the Beatles' optimism.

The fact that Lennon's murder occurred in New York, U.S.A., makes it hard not to feel a deep sense of shame in being an American, the kind of shame I haven't experienced since Vietnam. With the war, at least, we were able to feel that we were doing all we could to try to end it; there is no way to fight against the irrevocability of one person's death. What a bitter irony for Lennon to die in the country he fought so long and hard to stay in, despite all the efforts of the Nixon administration to expel him because of his anti-war activities. On *Double Fantasy* Lennon and Ono pose in front of their apartment house on Manhattan's Central Park West; printed on a side of the photograph is a message: "With special thanks to all the people, known and unknown, who helped us stay in America, without whom this album would not have been made."

Lennon and the Beatles will be remembered for so many things. Each of us will undoubtedly emphasize different aspects of their history. For some it will be the way they revived the music of Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Buddy Holly

LETTERS

IN THESE TIMES is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

RELIGION

AS A MORE OR LESS REGULAR READER, I have to concur with all the kudos on your fourth birthday. I also share many of your "thoughts" as expressed in your birthday editorial. All of which places us, I think (as John Sebastian sang in his song "Magical Connection"), on a "parallel direction, in between the lines."

However, parallel lines never meet, according to some theorists, but relativists may see a point of convergence, somewhere along the infinite curve of the universe. Therefore, my question for *ITT*, and many U.S. socialists, is when are you going to take the religious community seriously? *ITT* rarely covers the good work of religious social activists of any kind, even though various denominations and ecumenical religious groups often take stands and actions comparable to those on the secular left, and often with greater impact.

How many readers know, for example, of the activities of such interesting and influential national social action organizations as Clergy and Laity Concerned, Sojourners, Evangelicals for Social Action, Bread for the World, and the once McCarthyized Methodist Federation for Social Action, among others?

It is curious that, while corporate America is attacking the National Council of Churches and mainstream denominations as "Marxists marching under the banner of Christ" for taking ethical stands (under the rubric of "corporate responsibility") on such issues as nuclear power, the Nestle boycott and investments in South Africa, there is silence on the left.

—Fred Clarkson
Washington, D.C.

FUN ARMY?

I WAS SURPRISED BY THE RECENT MOVIE review you ran on *Private Benjamin* (*ITT*, Nov. 19). It emphasized the comic and cutesy sides of the film. Perhaps it is just my paranoia in these "Days of Reagan," but I was struck by a different interpretation of the film. *Private Benjamin* strikes me as part of a well-calculated media blitz to repopularize the military in a post-Vietnam America.

One obvious message of the film is to tell women that the road to liberation starts in the draft board.

Goldie Hawn seems to be portraying post-Vietnam America, weakened by indecision and memories of her past life. She comes around soon enough to the way of the '80s. *Private Benjamin* seems like a cinematic effort to get the country to do the same.

More importantly, *Private Benjamin* takes that healthy adolescent defiance of authority symbols that many 18 and 19-year-olds (read: draft age) are prone to and says that joining the army can be a solution for dissatisfaction with life. This theme, defy the world and join the fun army, is presented in a sexually enticing, comical, benign-appearing medium. We must continually be on guard for the many subliminal manners in which the powers-that-be try to win us over.

By the way, thanks a lot for printing such a fine paper. You do good work. Keep it up.

—Edmond S. Weisbart
Flint, Mich.

PERSISTENCE

I AGREE FULLY WITH YOUR POST-ELECTION editorial, "The left now has nowhere to go but up" (*ITT*, Nov. 19), when it argues that Reagan's victory is less than an impressive mandate. It also agreed with Barry Commoner's perception about non-voters as a potential new constituency for a practical socialist politics.

But after this cogent analysis, you come up with a non-sequitur: "Given the nature of our political system, the solution is not a third party. Both structurally and historically, ours is a two-party system."

You disapprovingly remind us of the socialists who ran someone for City Council in Iowa City in the '70s, got 26 percent of the vote in their first try and concluded that electoral politics doesn't work. Isn't that the same thing you are doing by giving up on the Citizens Party nationally? After all, the Citizens Party is only eight months old and spent most of its initial energy simply getting on the ballot this year.

Should we give up the struggle for socialism just because we are not presently a socialist system? Should we give up the struggle to enlarge the political arena just because we have historically been a two-party system?

If even independent socialist newspapers such as yours tell us it must be a two-party system and do not take third-party movements on the national level seriously, how can we expect to convince the vast majority of our fellow citizens to give up their chronic "lesser-evilism"? You only help to create a self-fulfilling prophesy.

—Len Perlman
Albuquerque, N.M.

REVOLTING

THE PERSONALS CONTINUE TO BE political, that is to say, politically revolting, as pointed out in Bill Fishman's letter (*ITT*, Nov. 12). In the same issue as his letter, we learn that "Oriental women want to write" us.

Oh, boy. Docile women, guaranteed to be more delightfully passive than their white counterparts. My Asian stomach churns at the image of us as subservient, almond-eyed joys. I have absolutely no doubt this is the image that ad wishes to evoke, and the sad fact is that this image can be conjured up merely by the use of the words "Oriental women."

To paraphrase Emma Goldman, "If I have to dance (and serve tea), can this be the revolution?"

—Betty Wheeler
Amarillo, Tex.

EL SALVADOR

PLEASE STRAIGHTEN YOURSELF OUT and start providing accurate and timely information about what is happening in El Salvador.

There is not a place in the world any more likely to face full-scale U.S. military intervention in the near future. It



... RETURN WITH US NOW TO THOSE THRILLING DAYS OF YESTERYEAR.

is bad enough that *ITT* gives so little space to this explosive situation, but it is unforgivable that when *ITT* does provide information, it is out of date and/or misleading.

ITT finally noticed that land reform is not working six months after nearly every liberal organization (not to mention parts of the Catholic church) had declared it a fraud. Then *ITT* reported that the U.S. claims a neutral position and questioned this only to the extent that some U.S. helicopters, supposedly to be used for crop dusting, have been involved in combat. My dear friends, the U.S. government has been openly sending explicit military aid to the Salvadorean government for over a year now—just recently another \$5 million in military aid was approved by Congress. This is not neutrality.

I suggest that we all have a responsibility here. Do not hinder our (your

readers') ability to respond in a responsible manner by either not or ill-informing us. *ITT* has an important responsibility to provide its readers with accurate and timely information. Help us act responsibly by letting us rely on you for this purpose.

—Sandra Zickeloose
Los Angeles

Editor's Note: In the past five months, we have run four articles on El Salvador, including one cover story. We have always identified the ruling junta as U.S.-backed and quoted the figures on military aid mentioned in your letter (*ITT*, Aug. 27, 1980).

MARXIST?

I WAS SURPRISED TO SEE THAT IN MY report from Greece (*ITT*, Oct. 22) the word Marxist had been placed in quotation marks in the passage where I described the late Nicos Poulantzas as

a Marxist sociologist. This editorial change can mean only one of two things: either that it is inaccurate to attribute the term Marxist to Poulantzas, or that the very term Marxist has itself become suspect. I reject both implications.

—Fred Halliday
London

CORRECTION

Barbara Brotman, author of "Did ERA groups just throw money at politicians?" (*ITT*, Dec. 10) is a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

IN THESE TIMES

What's good for the Republicans...

It seems that everyone who contacts the newspaper these days asks the same question: "What does the Republican landslide mean for *In These Times* in 1981 and beyond?" We've never claimed to have a crystal ball, but after four years in the business we do have some thoughts about the future that are more than idle speculation.

First the good news. As regular readers know, 1980 was a tough year for *In These Times* financially. One reason for that—though certainly not the only one—was that election campaigns claimed a lot of time and money that might otherwise have been available to the newspaper. We expect a better response to all of our fundraising and promotional efforts in 1981. And even though the resources of the left were spread pretty thin in 1980, we finished the year on a

sounder financial footing and with broader organizational support (witness the anniversary greetings, *In These Times*, Nov. 5, 1980) than ever before.

We also believe that, in a year when most peoples' energies and attention were occupied by elections, *In These Times* established itself as an essential forum for the discussion of political perspectives on the left. Even readers who disagree with us on questions like the role of third parties or the importance of state and local races, acknowledge that the newspaper plays an important role in reporting on and informing that debate.

In These Times does not exist in a vacuum. To a great extent, how the Reagan years may affect *In These Times* depends on how the prospect of a "moral" Washington and an unabashedly

procorporate Congress affects the newspaper's constituency—the entire range of politically active groups from environmentalists to the left of the trade union movement for whom *In These Times* is becoming the paper of record.

Already—as David Moberg has reported in recent issues—there are some hopeful signs that the right-wing sweep may galvanize a new wave of political activism on the left. Trade union and public interest groups are just now meeting to map out their strategies for the '80s. If the energy and commitment that have been evident in those sessions can be sustained, the Reagan years may see a revival of the left and growth for *In These Times*.

We will report on these new strategies as they unfold, and contribute our own opinions to the process.

IN DEPTH



E.P. Thompson wants to stop deployment of cruise and SS-20 missiles.

Nuclear-free Europe is aim of disarmament movement

By Christopher Garlock

THE EMINENT BRITISH HISTORIAN E.P. THOMPSON IS BEST known for his classic study, *The Making of the English Working Class*. Thompson's conviction that people make their own history in the context of given social relations has inspired his historical writings as well as his political activism. After World War II, Thompson traveled to Yugoslavia and Bulgaria as a youth brigade volunteer to help the fledgling partisan governments. He was active in the peace movement in the early '50s, and was a leader of the fight against

Stalinism within the British Communist Party in 1956. A long-time leader of the New Left in Britain, most recently he has been active in the nascent British disarmament movement. He spoke with Christopher Garlock during a conference of the Social Science History Association in Rochester, N.Y., in November.

How did the new movement for European disarmament begin and what has it accomplished so far?

The idea for an all-European movement originally came out of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation. Already there are various national movements led by different coalitions.

The Norwegian and Danish movements were the first to successfully block the deployment of cruise missiles in their countries. The Dutch movement has pulled together a very broad alliance from the churches to the far left. They voted out the Dutch government in December 1979, just one day before the NATO conference in Brussels that approved the cruise missile. Since then, the Belgian movement has been strong enough to defeat the Belgian government and insure a six-month postponement.

The British movement didn't really get going until April 1980, but now it has become very big. We held a press conference at the end of April and issued an appeal to expel nuclear weapons from all European countries and create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Europe.

How were these national alliances formed?

In Great Britain, the dominant political complexion is Labour Party and trade

union activists. There are also a lot of ecologists involved, a lot of church people, and a lot of people who never got involved in politics before. This is particularly true in eastern England where the cruise missile is expected to come. In two months, 40 local groups were formed—some in major towns and some in quite small village communities. We had a national demonstration in Trafalgar Square in London on Oct. 26. It was a very big demonstration—some 80,000 people.

Does the formation over the past year of the European disarmament movement mean there is a feeling that this is a crucial time?

In terms of specific decisions, yes, since these decisions are being made against a background of increasing tension and war threats.

It has only recently gotten through to Europeans that—particularly in the Pentagon—there's quite a concrete plan for a so-called limited war that would not extend to United States territory.

So we're actually having weapons on our soil that could be employed—within an attempted theater war strategy—that would destroy most of Europe.

There is also the realization that while we have all been going to sleep over the past 10 years, lulled by the phrase "détente," there has been no disarmament of any kind whatever.

Moreover, we are aware now that the voice of Europe, East or West, is consulted very little in anything that is going on. Gromyko and Muskie have been meeting for weeks to try and get an agenda on reduction of so-called "European

theater weapons," and there is no European seat at the table. There is a pervasive consciousness in Europe that the two superpowers are arguing over our heads.

But this has been going on since after World War II. Why the sudden sense of a need for immediate action?

There is no question that there will be a nuclear collision in the next 20 years, and this will pretty well finish off northern civilization. I think people realize that these next five years are crucial for reversing this thrust towards collision, or we will never be able to stop it.

Does this explain the sudden mobilization?

It's a combination of this crisis and the fact that two decisions have been made this past year that dramatized the continuing escalation—the leapfrogging going on all the time.

First was the cruise missile decision. These weapons are to be owned and operated by U.S. personnel on European territory, which makes the European allies into client states with very little control in any emergency.

There was no proper democratic discussion of this decision. It was taken at the NATO meeting on Dec. 12, 1979—it was never discussed in the British Parliament.

There's a lot of double-talk about the cruise missiles. The explanation is that they're supposed to answer the Russian SS-20. But this isn't the true scenario because the cruise missiles reach much farther into Russian territory, while the SS-20 can't cross the Atlantic.

The second decision was whether to go on with the so-called independent British deterrent, because the submarine-launched Polaris missile system is becoming obsolete.

There are various options open—one, of course, being just to close it down. But Mrs. Thatcher chose the most expensive of all. At a time when the British economy is collapsing in many areas, she decided to buy the newer Trident system from the U.S. at a cost of millions of pounds.

What are the immediate objectives of the disarmament movement?

We're going to stop the cruise missile, I'll tell you that flat. It's going to happen. I think, in fact, they're beginning to realize that it's going to be stopped. They're already looking for a way out. They're going to give some technological reason—that they're going to have submarines instead, or something.

Even if, in Britain, we don't succeed in politically defeating the government as the Dutch and Belgians have done, we shall lie down in front of them. Thousands and thousands of people will lie down in front of them and go to prison rather than let them come.

They can't cope with that. These things are actually very vulnerable to massive popular protest because you know where they are, you can block the roads around them, you can cut the wire and try to get in, you can demonstrate again and again. We aren't doing this yet, but we are making it clear that we will take peaceful direct action if they do not reverse their decision.

And after the cruise missile is stopped? We're going to try to stop the SS-20. This is the most difficult part. We're trying to build a common European movement.

While Gromyko and Muskie—or whoever Reagan puts in to replace Muskie—will go on interminably arguing above the heads of Europe, we're going to try and enter into direct negotiations with the peace movement in Eastern Europe. I think they may listen to us more than they listen to the U.S. This takes a long time. It's very difficult. But we have Eastern European signatories to our appeal and we were engaged in very good discussions with the Poles just before all the strikes started.

How will the European movement affect peace efforts in the U.S.?

This is where we can help you. That's what some of my American friends think, too. Five very eminent MIT scientists sent a message through me to the Trafalgar Square rally. And they told me, "If

you can begin a process of disarmament in Europe, then it's going to make talking between Russia and America more possible."

I believe this is true. The trouble is that it's at the very top where agreement is the most difficult. It becomes a game of face, a complicated game of strategic chess, losing one pawn against another. It is a game in which delay is of the essence—they go on for years discussing these treaties. We have to generate a movement of people at the bottom.

What hope do you see for the future?

Maybe I'm a bit too idealistic, but I think ideal or moral factors have been important. When it comes to an issue as big as this, people will sometimes act against their immediate material interests. You get periods in history where the old forms begin to dissolve and new moods develop. I think this is particularly true among young people in Europe now. They have grown up in a Cold War world made by their parents and grandparents. I'm one of the last generation of people who remember a Europe that was not divided across the middle.

It's funny. You get these sort of notions, ideological maps in one's head of East and West Europe, but just go across the frontier and you find so many shared interests: shared clothes, shared music, shared intellectual interests. You even find a quite active area of shared churches. Maybe we have come to the end of a period; the divisions are beginning to break down. That is the most hopeful thing.

Christopher Garlock is a reporter for the Rochester Patriot.

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PERSPECTIVES

Soviets keep firm hand on Poles' "long leash"

By Louis Menashe

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, KNOWN FOR ITS SUCCESS IN THE business of survival amidst adversity over hundreds of years, last week gave the Polish dissident movement a lecture in political realism. A spokesman for the church hierarchy in Poland summed up the current situation with bracing clarity: "We live in a concrete system and a concrete geopolitical situation. Everybody must accept it and get on with it." Every Pole knows what that injunction means. Politics in Poland—what party and state authorities euphemistically call the "Polish *raison d'état*"—is the art of what Moscow considers possible. As of this writing, no direct Soviet military intervention has taken place. But de facto intervention has existed for many weeks now, in the form of massed Warsaw Pact troops in battle positions on Poland's borders and a steady stream of warnings from party-state presses in Prague, Moscow and East Berlin. It would come as no surprise if Soviet KGB security specialists were already in place in Warsaw advising their Polish colleagues on how

62 years ago Nov. 11—a non-date in the official Polish calendar.

The spokesman for the Polish Catholic Church, Rev. Alojzy Orszulik, also singled out for criticism one of the leaders of KOR (the Committee for Social Self Defense), Jacek Kuron, who has also been one of Walesa's chief advisors since the eruption of the workers' movement in Gdansk last summer. Rev. Orszulik attributed to Kuron a statement that "irritated the whole bloc" by expressing the conviction that the opposi-

and workers; it is doing so again. Government gestures in appreciation of such support have included the usual step of appointing an independent Catholic member of the parliament to the post of deputy prime minister—an interesting echo of what in Italy is called the "historic compromise," or the unity of communist and non-communist elements in the task of reform and national regeneration.

Polish authorities need the support of the vibrant workers' movement. Having achieved its main demand for independence, the movement must not only guard its precious victory but also demonstrate its national responsibility as a force for stability, moral renewal and productivity. This means very carefully modulating its political voice. Last August, when a student shouted at a group of workers at the Gdansk shipyards, "You must demand the abolition of all censorship!" one old worker replied, "You don't remember Czechoslovakia in 1968, do you, my son?"

Concurrently, the new Kania leadership has to reciprocate; it has to stick to the promises made to workers last summer and demonstrate its good faith. If Polish leaders carry through on their promises, they will be in an immeasurably stronger position than the Czechs 12 years ago. The impetus for the Czech reforms came largely from intellectuals in and outside the Party and from the media—not from an active, mass working-class movement as in the Polish case. There were signs, in fact, that Czech workers were uneasy about some of the implications of new economic policies favored by the reformers—intensifying market mechanisms, increasing wage differentials, punishing inefficiency, and so on.

In Poland, the workers have been the motor of reform, not its passive recip-

oric about protecting U.S. security in the Persian Gulf. Other NATO capitals saw Soviet intentions differently and responded with greater equanimity. Besides, where wheat, technology and credits to the USSR are concerned, Western capital is always eager to find understudies for the American role.

The new Reagan administration, despite all the tough talk from governor and candidate Reagan in the past on foreign policy issues, might be more sensitive to the U.S. trading position than its predecessor. Reagan's attitudes toward the USSR may in fact turn out to be more instrumental and less ideological than the Carter-Brzezinski policies. Oddly enough, given the all-but-wrecked condition of U.S.-Soviet detente and the threatening weather in Poland, this may be the ripe moment for a new opening to the USSR, à la Nixon's initiatives beginning in 1969—not too long after, it should be recalled, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

A very long leash.

But Poland is neither Afghanistan nor Czechoslovakia. Poland has always been special in both Eastern and Western eyes. The modern Polish state was founded as a protege of the Western alliance after World War I. England and France went to war over Hitler's attack on Poland in 1939. (They had blessed and stood by Hitler's earlier dismemberment of Czechoslovakia.) The recent NATO communique warning of Soviet military action against Poland is more substantial than the equivalent warnings issued after Afghanistan. And no American administration could afford relaxed attitudes toward the USSR with Soviet tanks in Warsaw.

Above all, Poland is especially special seen from Moscow—Soviet or Tsarist Moscow. Over a hundred years ago, defending another Russian intervention in Poland, a Russian publicist wrote, "This Polish problem is as much Russian as it is Polish. The Polish problem will always be a problem of Russia. Since ancient times, history has placed the fatal question of life and death between these two related peoples."

In 1945 Stalin, citing reasons of honor and security, was willing to risk the break-up of the Grand Alliance and invite the great hostilities of the Cold War in order to keep Poland in the Soviet orbit. Twenty-five years later, the Soviet Union would very likely be willing to risk war and the horrifying possibilities of nuclear exchanges in order to insure the stability and the unity of the Warsaw (Warsaw!) Pact countries, with Poland at its keystone. All sides should recognize that.

While Soviet concerns over Poland are strongest, the restraints on Soviet behavior from the Polish side are also stronger than anywhere in Eastern Europe. The depths of Polish nationalism—with its distinctive anti-Russian edge—the strength of the Polish Catholic Church, the resistance of the Polish peasantry to collectivized forms of agriculture, and the class-consciousness and political weight of the Polish working class all add up to a formidable force for political and social reform. The Soviets have allowed the Poles a very long leash. The emergence of an independent trade-union organization is perhaps the most radical within-the-system development in the Soviet bloc since de-Stalinization in the USSR in the 1950s. The Czechs were invaded for much less.

Still, the limits to reform in Poland are as apparent as the restraints on Soviet behavior. There can be no formal challenge to the authority of the Polish Communist Party, nor can there be any internal threat to the Warsaw Alliance. For Poland, as for Eastern Europe in general, the "legitimate" and full-bodied path to reform can appear only when the Soviet working class finds its ample voice.

Meanwhile, if you are sending New Year's greetings to Polish friends or relatives, wish them luck and a cool head. Send copies to Moscow and Washington.

Louis Menashe contributes regularly to *In These Times* on Soviet affairs.



to manage the crisis.

Apart from the inherent instability of an independent trade union movement coexisting with a party-state used to monopolizing all forms of power and decision-making—a situation bound to generate permanent tension and conflict—the present crisis seems to consist of two parts. One is the result of accumulated work stoppages over the last several months; members of the Soviet bloc are complaining that the Poles are not fulfilling their trade commitments and delivery schedules. Another is the continuing political gumption of the workers' movement, led by Lech Walesa; most recently, "Solidarity" spoke out on behalf of jailed dissidents whose views are unpalatable to Soviet-bloc authorities everywhere.

One of the dissidents is Leszek Moczulski, who a year ago helped organize the Confederation of Independent Poland—a formation without precedent in Eastern Europe—that proclaimed active opposition to the Polish Communist Party. Last September Moczulski was arrested for advocating the overthrow of communism in an interview published in the West German *Der Spiegel*. The other three jailed figures are nationalists arrested for leading demonstrations commemorating the birth of modern Poland

tion would try to gain power only gradually so as not to provoke Soviet intervention. Statements such as Kuron's only feed into the Soviet view that the Polish workers' movement is being used by counter-revolutionary, anti-socialist elements as cover to further their own political designs.

At this juncture, the Polish Communist Party must demonstrate to Moscow that stability has been re-established at the workplace and that political dissent does not threaten the authority of the Party nor the survival of Polish socialism. Given the extraordinary depth of the present Polish crisis—the Poles have experienced worker-generated explosions in 1956, 1970 and 1976, but none has had the wallop of this one—the Party needs substantial support from different quarters. The difficulty of course is proportioning the character and size of concessions made in return for that support to a scale that will not alarm Moscow.

Modulating the workers' voice.

The Catholic Church—its unique position in a Communist country assured and even strengthened by the recent events—has already emerged as a powerful pillar of the regime. At the height of the August events, the church appealed for moderation on the part of dissidents

or victims. Several times they have demonstrated that no official policies designed to get the economy out of hot water at labor's expense can slip by them.

The Reagan difference.

When the Giersek leadership cut back government supports for certain consumer goods, thereby raising the prices of such staples as sugar and meat, popular wrath was the result. In part, the government action was a classic austerity measure in the face of a huge external debt to Western creditors. Much of the repayment of that \$20 billion debt is falling due now and in 1981. No one wants to see the Poles default; neither Western nor Soviet-bloc interests would be served by blemishing a clean record of prompt payment by the USSR and the Eastern European countries. All sides have a stake in calming the Polish turbulence, if only because the long-term trading interests of East and West—one of the essential ingredients of detente—require a tension-free international climate.

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan didn't help matters of detente; but it didn't hurt that much either. The Carter administration was anxious to show it could stand up to "Soviet expansionism" and responded with trade cut-offs, a commitment to military muscle, and strong rhet-

ART & ENTERTAINMENT

FILM



Shingen, mortally wounded during a siege, nears death.

Feudal epic tells of ruin

By Jon Spayde

Akira Kurosawa's *Kagemusha*, a three-hour epic of feudal warfare in 16th-century Japan, has come to the U.S. under the sponsorship of his disciples George Lucas and Francis Ford Coppola. Billed as "Executive Producers of the International Version," they have taken care to do a first-rate job. Careful editing has tightened the overlong and misshapen film that premiered last summer in Tokyo. The result is what was intended all along—a Kurosawa comeback.

Kurosawa, the director of *Rashomon* and *Ikiru*, had trouble finding financial backing during a long period of psychological instability, broken-off projects and artistic aimlessness. But hope and help came from the New World. With Lucas and Coppola as backers, the *Kagemusha* project was born as an international joint venture, and the mighty Japanese press and public relations industry swung into action to promote the film as such. For nearly a year before it was released, Japanese television carried an advertisement for Suntory V.S.O.P. whiskey that showed Kurosawa and Coppola convivially clinking glasses, while a voiceover said, "When friends from distant places get together, one thing they can agree on is good whiskey." Nearer the release date, the same ad included battle footage from the film.

In Japan a four-hour *Kagemusha* was received by both audiences and critics with a dutiful respect. Kurosawa had, after all, appeared in a pre-release NHK-TV documentary in the role of a *dai-sensei*, a distinguished master and teacher, and his film had the feel of a masterpiece, even if its stately pace put many to sleep.

The International Version, a much better film, is being received in America with enthusiasm and occasional adulation. The obvious parallels have been drawn—this is a thinking man's *Star Wars*, a more mature *Apocalypse Now*. At last a big-budget blockbuster—with eye-appeal and gaudy explosions—has been

directed by a certified Old Master of the international cinema.

Kagemusha, like *Apocalypse*, buttresses its claim on our attention with a great deal of "literary" theme-building. Coppola's boat-ride into Cambodia suggests Huck Finn and Melville as well as paying the obvious debt to Conrad and Eliot. Kurosawa returns for his setting to the *Sengoku* ("Country-at-War") era, the period of desperate feudal warfare that took up most of the 16th century and ended with the triumph of the house of Tokugawa Ieyasu and the establishment of a centralized feudalism that lasted until Commodore Perry disrupted it in 1853. This is the era of Kurosawa's costume masterpieces—*Seven Samurai* and *Throne of Blood*—a period of social turmoil when ambitious generals maneuvered to win absolute power. It is also the period of *Shogun*, and it's altogether likely that the American popularity of *Kagemusha* owes something to judicious timing.

Unlike the other two films, however, *Kagemusha* introduces real historical characters under their own names: Ieyasu, his brilliant ally-of-convenience Oda Nobunaga, and their adversary Takeda Shingen (Tatsuya Nakadai). Shingen is so concerned with the preservation of his feudal house that he orders his retainers to keep his death a secret for three years, and to guard and strengthen the domain during that time. A common thief, who bears a striking physical resemblance to the lord, is trained in secret to become his double.

Shingen's death comes with a single musket round fired by one of Ieyasu's snipers, and the thief is brought forward, charged with the tricky task of fooling everyone in his household—including grandson and mistresses. Kurosawa handles the "king-for-a-day" comedy subtly, echoes the "double" theme in the Russian fiction he loves so much, and even resorts to Christology: a thief saved from crucifixion "redeems" his endangered people until his identity is uncovered and he is driven out of the castle with rocks and wads of mud.

The destruction of the entire Takeda army at the end of the film places *Kagemusha* in a literary tradition that stretches back to the 12th century in Japan—the somber tale that tells of the ruin of a noble house.

But the claims of *Kagemusha* upon high culture are rather less interesting than its exploration of the Japanese historical conscience, and of a certain perennial Japanese way of responding to historical change. At this level, comparisons with *Apocalypse*



Now are very much to the point. Nobunaga and Ieyasu are more than carefully recreated historical characters; they represent two distinct historical destinies of the Japanese.

Nobunaga is a nervous, hungry wolf, cynically eager to use European techniques while he persecutes Christians. He wears the metal breastplate of a *Conquistador*, goes into battle with the blessing of his tame Portuguese priests, and looks as if he could devour the world. He is the prophet of Japanese industrialism and imperialism, of the bewildering age that began with Perry's ships and ended with the Enola Gay.

Ieyasu, mild and wily, is the perfect bureaucrat. His world will win out first: the well-administered, numbingly conformist and thoroughly paranoid world of the *sakoku* ("closed-country") policy, 1634-1868.

Having won the empire with fire-arms, Ieyasu will outlaw them.

Kurosawa's Shingen represents something quite different. His concern for the maintenance of his fief, a concern that precedes any other ambition, is embodied in the three-year promise and in a word that is repeated again and again: *ugoku-na*. "Don't move." It is the expression of a profound desire to preserve a legacy, against the savage *Sengoku* forces that would tear it to pieces. The *kagemusha*, the "shadow warrior," the stand-in, is the empty sign that guarantees this preservation. Accoutred in Shingen's armor, wearing Shingen's fierce mustache, he is Shingen in a feudal system that reveres the sign. Kurosawa fills his film with banners that bear Japanese heraldry, with brilliant gilt emblems in brocade, and with fierce helmet emblems that recall Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*. "Don't move," the Takeda house-men hiss to the motionless double, decked out in Shingen's brocade and armor. The corpses pile up around him, and still they say, "Don't move." Kurosawa's camera watches him, "not moving," instead of the savage battle itself. The slightest motion might give the game away.

The battles, when we see them, are nothing like the bloody ballets in most Japanese sword operas. They are thoroughly modern, fought by foot-slogging musketeers or massed cavalry, and evoke the opening months of the First World War.

It is clear that Kurosawa means his *Sengoku* scene to stand in for a technologized, fragmented modern world, fraught with surprise horrors. *Ugoku-na*, then, is the sign of a longing for a safe, filial, orderly motionlessness, a hierarchy based on true loyalty, a Confucianism without hypocrisy or paranoia. Takeda tries to bequeath such an order to his domain, and the double is his tool, as well as the symbol of the imper-

sonality of that order. The hope is vain, and ends, as all the Japanese "noble failure" stories end, in extinction.

Every people, one supposes, has a particular way of thinking about "salvation," about what they must do to save themselves from being engulfed in the fearful chaos of change. It is to Coppola's credit that, in *Apocalypse*, he understands the American answer so well. Kurtz is the demonic embodiment of our desire to do something, to take action, to resolve the "problem" of Vietnam by a ruthlessness that is uncomplicatedly effective and therefore curiously pure and clean. To answer the question any other way is to give in to the chaotic reality of politics, and Americans have always expelled complexity from their political vision. Americans long to clear obstacles.

The Japanese, by contrast, long to build walls. They seek to preserve and protect first of all, to answer chaos and change with a nervous and wary motionlessness that in extreme cases becomes a kind of death-wish. Kurosawa dramatizes this desire. At the same time, he is sympathetic to the nobility of purpose embodied in this desire. (The thief, wandering on the final battlefield, takes a bullet and falls into a river. The Takeda banner, inscribed with the family *credo*, floats past his outstretched hand as he dies.) Coppola has no such option.

This film, a brave new beginning for Kurosawa, is also an old man's lament for the entire modern history of his country, and a polemic against history itself. It would be well if those young Japanese who have been told to take Kurosawa as their *dai-sensei* would see *Kagemusha*, admire it as it deserves, and then reject Shingen's dream as decisively as we, with greater ease, reject Kurtz' final solution. ■ John Spayde is a writer and a student of Japanese literature.

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Iran

Continued from page 7

Bani-Sadr still enjoys considerable support among the educated urban population and growing support from the merchants of the bazaar. The bazaar played an important role in bringing Khomeini to power and—even before the war began—the merchants were beginning to voice the view that all was not well in the Islamic Republic.

But the big question-mark is still the army. Bani-Sadr has cultivated the military leadership carefully and has secured the release of hundreds of qualified air force and army personnel needed at the front who were imprisoned after a coup attempt last July. But the army has kept a low profile in this war and it remains to be seen how far it will choose to exert the influence that, given the logic of war, it should now be able to deploy.

The exigencies of the conflict have made both sides more pliant in international relations, though less so than might at first sight have appeared likely. The Iraqis, who have not been re-supplied to any serious extent by their main arms providers, the Russians, have nonetheless repeated that they consider Russia a close ally. It remains a mystery how far the West secretly encouraged them to attack; certainly no large quantities of Western arms have reached Baghdad.

But the West almost certainly did play a role in two other respects. First, the very existence of the Iran-U.S. crisis meant that Baghdad knew Iran would not get additional military aid—and that the U.S. would not actively oppose a punitive assault on Iran.

Second, whether directly or via intermediaries such as the Jordanians, the Saudis, and exiled Iranian generals, the Iraqis will have received western intelligence estimates of Iran's state of military preparedness. The malicious sug-

gestion being made in some quarters is that these self-same Iranian generals were also in touch with Israel, and that the Israelis deliberately fed the Iraqis false information in order to see them weakened for years to come. Whether or not the Iraqis can ever be said to have won, the West certainly hopes that the Iraqi attack has prepared the way for a long struggle against the Islamic Republic.

The Iranians have taken a somewhat more cautious stand on the hostages question and this does not appear to be an issue in the Rajai-Bani Sadr conflict. Only the minority Fedayin and its allies persist in talking of the hostages as "spies" with the implication that they should still be put on trial. But given the past mobilizations, no Iranian government can simply abdicate on this issue.

On the other side, Iranian officials have ceased denouncing the Soviet Union, and, as I found out on a visit to the Afghan city of Herat in late October, military supplies from Iran to the Afghan rebels seem to have dried up. But the obvious strategic option for Iran—openly seeking a new alliance with Moscow in the face of the Iraqi attack—seems beyond the vision of the Iranian leaders.



Besides damaging the economies of the two countries, the war has raked up enormous bitterness that will make any permanent or negotiated settlement hard to achieve. And it has gravely weakened the two countries in the face of outside powers.

Were the war to lead to a much wider conflagration it would be a serious matter for the West and for the USSR, but so far this has not occurred. Instead, the conflict has given the U.S. and its allies a perfect legitimization for an increase in their forces in the region that they have been seeking for two years. Despite the common border with Iran, the Russians have far less leverage in the conflict at the moment: They have neither hostages nor forces stationed in the Gulf. But they must be greatly alarmed at the way in which the Iraqi action has opened the

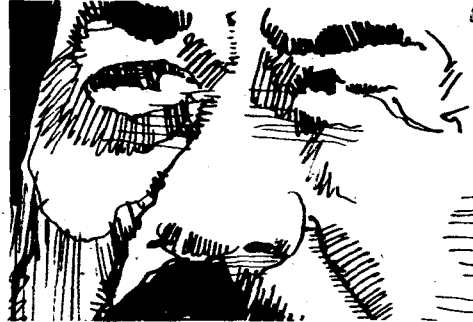


regional door to American intervention.

For that reason, the Soviets repeated an offer they have made before for an international agreement to protect the West's access to Gulf oil and to keep outside powers out of the region. The West has in the past rejected this offer, first because the supposed threat of a Russian advance is useful in intimidating Gulf rulers, and second because they see no reason to give the Russians a negotiated say in the affairs of the Gulf that they do not already have.

Whatever its role in assisting the offensive, the West is now maneuvering to use the conflict to advantage. At it will prepare the ground for an upheaval in Iran that will reverse the strategic verdict of the anti-Shah revolution. At least, it will provide the context in which, with the two major powers of the Gulf economically and militarily weakened, the West can reassert its hegemony in the region.

Fred Halliday is a fellow of the IPS Transnational Institute.



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January 2

Prof. Richard Marienstras, French author and Jewish Socialist activist, will speak on "Anti-Semitism in France." The talk will be sponsored by the Jewish Socialist Youth

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Paul Krassner, America's leading political satirist, returns to Chicago Dec. 23-Jan. 4 in the cabaret theater at Cross Currents, a new center of progressive culture. Shows are Wednesday through Sunday at 8:30 with 10:30 shows on Friday and Saturday. All tickets are \$5.00. For reservations and information call: 472-7884. Cross Currents, 3206 N. Wilton (900 West at Belmont).

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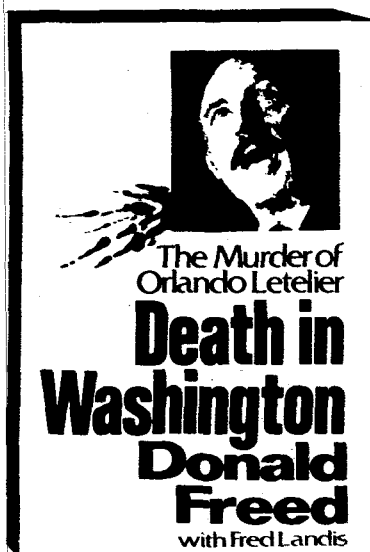
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Italy

Continued from page 6

wanted to stay to protect their buried possessions and livestock from the inevitable pillagers.

In Naples, with less damage but more people—a million and a half—the usual disorder turned to chaos. Communist mayor Maurizio Valenzi complained that no public services were possible because people refused to come to work, preferring to stay with their families. For instance, milk could not be distributed to children because only five out of 270 employees showed up for work. Any return to normal daily life seemed remote, as homeless families took over the public schools as their new residences and vowed they would not be dislodged. The disruption of the region's productive activity seemed all

the more drastic in that much of it belonged to the so-called "submerged" economy. It will take special ingenuity for the owners and employees of illegal, undeclared workshops to get government compensation for enterprises that officially never existed. Some of Naples' collapsed housing was also illegal. Indeed, it is notorious that for years before the left got handed the dubious prize of trying to govern Naples, Christian Democratic officials looked the other way as apartment houses were built without permits on unsafe sites contrary to all safety regulations.

Colonialism, Italian style.

This sort of corruption is much more widespread in the South than elsewhere because the Mezzogiorno has some of the characteristics of a Third World country or colony. The poor peasants have always seen rulers as dispensers of abuse or of favors; they have never been

fully integrated into a modern republic based on full awareness and belief in the rights and duties of citizens. Their ancient skepticism about the state has been only confirmed by the patronage practices of Christian Democracy, which, like a colonial government, has ruled Italy since the end of World War II with little fear of being thrown out of office for corruption for the simple reason that the U.S. will not allow Communists to govern Italy. That has given the Christian Democrats a permanent lease on the government, which they have been able to pillage with impunity.

In addition to its natural working-class base, the Italian Communist Party has long been the main pole of attraction for the civic-minded middle classes and intelligentsia shamed and revolted by the corruption and incompetence of Christian Democratic government and by the enormous gap between the rich, modern North and the under-



developed South. So it was quite predictable that in the aftermath of the Mezzogiorno earthquake, the PCI would call attention to its own superior capacity to deal with such matters. But Enrico Berlinguer's party went even farther, for the first time completely dropping the "historic compromise"—that is, a coalition between Christian Democrats and Communists—and calling for a new "government of moral recovery and renewal" excluding the Christian Democrats.

In a statement issued Nov. 27,

the PCI said the earthquake had dramatically raised the problems of efficiency and morality of political leadership. Pointing to its own high moral standards in office, the PCI said it was "necessary to recognize that at the moment when the DC is demonstrating its incapacity to guide the moral recovery and renewal of the state, it is objectively up to the PCI to be the promoting force and major guarantee of a government expressing and gathering the best energies, capable and honest men belonging to the various parties or to no party." The implication was a coalition with the Socialists and other laic parties currently in coalition with the Christian Democrats. But it would take more than the PCI's cautious and rather priggish proposal to jolt them loose. The apparent wish, however sincere and even laudable, to galvanize the missionary spirit of republican civic virtue seems oddly old-fashioned and inadequate for today's problems.

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Elapsed time: 60 seconds.

This Christmas, as a member of Western Temporaries' Santa Division, Class of '80, I have been Ho-Ho-Hoing at Macy's, Herald Square: the Largest Store in the World, Santaland, The Miracle on 34th Street.

Nearly two dozen Santas, 100 elves, dozens of technicians and managers join in creating the venerable institution of wish fulfillment and American commercialism: Santa Claus.

During the holiday rush, Macy's has as many as six Santa houses open to receive guests. Each house has a camera and several elves to attend the elderly gent on his red satin throne. Children are directed through an elaborately decorated maze

to the appropriate house by a system of availability lights. A red light flashes on when Santa is ready.

The store expects to receive more than 350,000 visitors through the maze this season. On a busy afternoon early in the season more than 1,400 persons saw Santa in one hour. That translates, subtracting for parent companions, into 60 lapsitters per hour, per Santa. The photo concession rang up \$10,000 in sales.

This enormous undertaking requires the smooth coordination of a Broadway production. This marathon play runs nearly a month, 12 hours a day. That explains why most Santas and elves are actors from the ranks of New York City's unemployed thespians. Santas, the crucial link in the chain of Christmas joy, must rehearse their role of guardian spirit.

Western Temps, which operates Santa concessions around the world, held an afternoon introduction for hired Clauses. "Santa is there for his public," the manager insisted. "He is not there to sell photographs. He is there to see that good photographs can be taken." The manager emphasized that Macy's does not present Santa to increase store revenues. Rather, he argued, Santa is a corporate responsibility, a way to pay back the community for supporting the store.

The real essence of Santa, we were told, is his metaphysical role. He is magic, he is spirit, he is, apparently, pure light transcending the bounds of time and space.

Santa is also a man of grave responsibility. "Santa is a public figure, and once you put on that suit you become a legend, a symbol—you become God to many children. You are all Santa, part of one team; you are all one thing."

Most Santas, however, see this as a gig, a source of meager income.

The week before Thanksgiving, Santas were united with their underpaid associates, the elves. Elves work for Macy's and receive \$3.20 an hour; Santas work for Western and are paid \$4.50 an hour. Here, the Macy's team took over.

We camped out in a lounge for three days of instruction on photos, traffic control, rules, regulations and the proper attitude. The managers alternately pumped up the staff and warned them against violating the rules. We played theater games—"O.K., everybody, be part of a big machine. Here, you start." It was reminiscent of Acting 101.

Macy's hires theater people to design the show, carry out the training, manage the operation and staff Santaland. But management writes the checks.

Perhaps the oddest moment of the training came when a longtime Santa, a veteran of many years, strode to the lectern to tell the elves, "We are the attraction, not you. Remember that. There are certain elves who I found it impossible to work with last year and I won't put up with it again this year." Tension rose as elves eyed Santas to see whether this met with general agreement among class-con-

scious Santas. But during the following weeks a sense of camaraderie among Santas and elves did emerge. Without it the traffic on a weekend would have been unbearable.

In the dressing room, one occasionally met the oddly disconcerting sight of Santas trading gifts, lists and offerings brought to them, their coats and beards set aside, their pillows strapped to their bellies. And since this was a theater crowd, comic routines emerged—tag-team Santa wrestling, for example.

But despite all the pretense and the absurdity of Santaland, the assembly-line well-wishing, being Santa is accompanied by a warm feeling. You become part of a childhood memory for the collection of souls that wander through the maze. You can't help but wish you could fulfill the dreams of a ragged youngster who straggles in alone or the emotionally disturbed man who chats with Santa as frankly as he might talk to a therapist or a priest. Gazing into the eyes of a dazzled three-year-old child, I found myself wishing that the camera would not click, that the gifts could be delivered, that Santa Claus could really be.

By K. KRINGLE